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**A PHILISTINE 'CULTURE'? LITERATURE,  
PAINTING, AND THE NEWSPAPERS  
IN LATE VICTORIAN TORONTO**

**Karen Davison-Wood**

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## ABSTRACT

### A PHILISTINE CULTURE? LITERATURE, PAINTING AND THE NEWSPAPERS IN LATE VICTORIAN TORONTO

Karen Davison-Wood, Ph.D. Humanities  
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This dissertation examines relationships between the arts and society as revealed by six Toronto daily newspapers between 1880-1896. It questions assessments made in concurrent periodicals that the newspapers and their readers ignored literature and painting and were cultural Philistines. Materials found in daily newspapers and other contemporary documents such as government publications and private letters were compared with similar matter in Toronto periodicals of the day.

Contrary to claims made in periodicals, the newspapers did report the cultural scene. Newspapers published reviews of Canadian books and art exhibitions; reported on the arts and highlighted teapot tempests of the cultural creators. Concerned with the development of an indigenous Canadian literature and painting, they advocated the delineation of distinctive Canadian subjects and Canadian scenery. They were concerned that Canadian culture should reflect Canadian society and thus, generally commended authors and artists for qualities which were seen as uniquely Canadian. This was in marked contrast to the periodicals which tended to praise creators for their cosmopolitan qualities.

Daily newspapers provided insights into the relationship between artist and society in the late nineteenth century. They indicated that the protectionist impulse at work in the trades and professions was also manifested in the cultural field. Authors and painters were concerned about reducing competition and improving their financial prospects. The role played by the Royal Canadian Academy and the Royal Society, actual schemes of patronage, and even internecine quarrels all have a new relevance in this respect. Newspapers both provided source material for such questions and acted as actual agencies of promotion themselves.

Toronto daily newspapers provided the mass-reading public with wide coverage on Canadian literature and painting. Their contents demonstrated that the narrowly moral aesthetic and cosmopolitan attitudes of the periodicals were not reflected in the reading matter of society at large. Rather than manifesting a Philistine mentality, these newspapers revealed a sensitive attitude to the arts which provided a far broader picture of late nineteenth-century culture than that hitherto revealed by the periodicals.

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## INTRODUCTION

Daily newspapers provide a large and hitherto largely unexplored source for the transmission of cultural ideas in the late nineteenth century. The scope and readership of English-language daily journals accommodated a large variety of English-Canadian attitudes on the development of an indigenous Canadian literature and art. In the past, research has been undertaken on the climate of nineteenth-century cultural opinion utilizing various periodicals. However, these publications had a very limited circulation. Further, the views perpetuated therein were those of a small group of critics. Thus, the ideas contained in the periodicals were not necessarily held by the populace. Indeed, these ideas rarely ever reached the public in their pristine form. Conversely, the newspaper was the vehicle of the reading masses. Hence, the quantity and content of articles carried in the newspapers provide an indication of the extent to which ideas held by the self-styled cultural elite were either shared by or at least disseminated to, the public at large.

This study examines the reaction to the work and presence of Canadian authors and artists publishing and exhibiting in the years 1880-1896 as revealed by the six daily newspapers produced in Toronto at that time. It compares the attitudes manifested in

the newspapers with those expressed in Toronto cultural periodicals of the same years.

Such a comparison is of particular importance because nineteenth-century periodical writers condemned the newspapers for their supposed failure to support Canadian culture. According to these writers, the newspapers' blind indifference to the arts resulted from Philistinism. Periodical writers felt they were waging a hopeless battle to foster a Canadian culture against the materialism and complacency manifested by Canadian society at large, and symbolized in the public's preference for newspapers over periodicals.<sup>1</sup>

In varying degrees, scholars have used the newspaper as evidence of past events. They are a particularly useful resource for scholars of Canadian nineteenth-century political history because the newspapers were preoccupied with the varying and often colourful political scene.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, because of this very prepon-

<sup>1</sup>Many writers in the periodicals expressed such sentiments. The most vociferous, perhaps, was Sara Jeannette Duncan. See: "Saunterings," Week, 30 Sept. 1886, pp. 707-08. Others included such people as G.M. Adam, "An Interregnum in Literature," Week, 12 June 1884, pp. 438-39; John A. Cooper, "Excessive Newspaper and Novel Reading," Canadian Magazine, 5 (April 1897), 547-48. G.M. Grant, "Anti-National Features of the National Policy," Canadian Magazine, 1 (March, 1893), 9-13.

<sup>2</sup>P.B. Waite's study of political opinion in the four founding provinces at the time of Confederation is an excellent example of the methodological value of newspapers. See: The Life and Times of Confederation 1864-1867: Politics, Newspapers, and the Union of British North America (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962 rpt. 1971).

derance of politics, literary historians have tended to ignore the newspapers. Thus, unintentionally, they have reinforced the notion that the Canadian daily journals contained little cultural material.<sup>3</sup> It is also sometimes suggested that the levelling effect of newspapers invalidate them as indicators of cultural thought. Yet this very democratic effect inherent in the necessity to appeal to a wide readership is significant evidence since it leads us to a sense of the larger mentalities of the late nineteenth century.

We have, then, a dearth of research into the literary contents of newspapers. Conversely, nineteenth-century Canadian periodical literature has provided literary historians with many valuable insights into the cultural background of the day. Robert L. McDougall has surveyed the nineteenth-century intellectual background through various periodicals.<sup>4</sup> Carl Ballstadt has examined

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<sup>3</sup>For example, Roy Daniells stated that the "texture of Canada's literary milieu in the three decades following Confederation can be reliably sampled in the pages of the Canadian Monthly, the Week and the Canadian Magazine. Newspapers, preoccupied with party politics, did not hold a clear mirror to national consciousness." See: "Confederation to the First World War," Literary History of Canada, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), I, 215. This opinion does not seem to be held by art historians who have frequently demonstrated the value of newspapers in their discipline. Dennis Reid's recent study of landscape painters, for example, relies heavily on newspaper reviews. See: Dennis Reid, Our Own Country Canada (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1979).

<sup>4</sup>Robert L. McDougall, "A Study of Canadian Periodical Literature of the Nineteenth Century," Diss. University of Toronto 1950.

nationalism in pre-confederation periodical criticism.<sup>5</sup> Claude T. Bissell utilized the Toronto periodical, The Week, to describe literary tastes in British and American literature of the late nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> More recently, T.D. MacLulich has considered the attitudes revealed by Canadian literary criticism contained in periodicals of the last two decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> However, the material contained in cultural periodicals was intended for a small and select audience—what Bissell termed the "small coterie" of intellectuals domiciled in Canada—and as such may not have been an accurate reflection of the ideals held by society at large.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the studies just mentioned concentrate on the literary background of the nineteenth century. Few attempts have been made to view the fields of literature and painting simultaneously although in the nineteenth century they were referred to

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<sup>5</sup> Carl Ballstadt, "The Quest for Canadian Identity in Pre-Confederation English-Canadian Literary Criticism," M.A. University of Western Ontario 1959.

<sup>6</sup> Claude T. Bissell, "Literary Taste in Central Canada During the Late Nineteenth Century," Canadian Historical Review, 31 (Sept., 1950), 237-51.

<sup>7</sup> T.D. MacLulich, "Literary Attitudes in English Canada 1880-1900," M.A. Simon Fraser University 1971.

<sup>8</sup> Bissell, p. 238.

as the "twin handmaids" of Canadian culture.<sup>9</sup> An examination of the two fields of endeavour within the context of their broad relationship to society could, therefore, provide new insights into the cultural climate of the late nineteenth century. Thus, the search for a documentary or aesthetic form, linking literature and painting to the larger assumptions of the nineteenth-century society which produced them, led me away from the cultural periodicals to that form—all-powerful for a day—the newspapers.

At the same time, the newspaper's unwieldy bulk presents a formidable task to the researcher. At present, indices to Canadian newspapers are generally unavailable. Researchers are left with the option of either sampling, or turning bound volumes page by page and cranking innumerable rolls of microfilm. Both methods have their pitfalls. Unsystematic sampling can lead to a distortion of evidence. In toto scanning is both time consuming and also unreliable since it is so easy for a fatigued eye to miss information which could be invaluable.

At the outset of this study, I had no preconceived ideas as to what the daily journals would contain. Indeed, I was not even certain there was actually any relevant cultural material contained

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<sup>9</sup> Although MacLulich's subject centres on literary attitudes, it does make some comparisons with both painting and the drama. G. M. Adam utilized the term "twin handmaids" in "The Repression of Art Culture," Week, 31 May 1889, p. 405.



in the newspapers. Thus, in order to place perimeters around the research, I chose to scan the newspapers of one city (Toronto) for a chronological period of time (1880-1896). This enabled me to make some systematic judgments about the materials these newspapers contained.

Toronto was chosen for this investigation as a city which one can argue contained all the skeletal requirements of a cultural centre by the 1880s.<sup>10</sup> Torontonians boasted of their commercial, intellectual, religious and cultural achievements.<sup>11</sup> The city's fiftieth anniversary was celebrated in 1882, and optimism was the by-word of the day. A special census ordered by the city fathers in 1888 revealed a population of 166,040.<sup>12</sup> A hundred years before, the population had been less than two hundred people.

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<sup>10</sup>Contemporary travel books described Toronto as "the literary and intellectual centre of the Dominion." See: George R. Parkin, The Great Dominion (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 98.

<sup>11</sup>Graeme Mercer Adam, for example, was effusive in his guide book Illustrated Toronto: "As the metropolis of Ontario, Toronto has a high and unchallenged share in the present and future of the Dominion. From her loins have gone forth not a little of the brain and muscle which have entered into it and contributed to its stability and greatness. . . . It has become a vast commercial emporium, a great railway centre, the literary 'hub' of the Dominion, the mecca of tourists, an Episcopal and Archi-episcopal see and the ecclesiastical headquarters of many denominations, and the seat of the law courts and the Provincial Legislature." Illustrated Toronto (Montreal: J. McCanniff, 1891), p. 23.

<sup>12</sup>"Toronto's Population: Special Census Shows Substantial Increase," Empire, 14 Dec. 1888.

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Commenting on the phenomenal progress of the city, the Toronto newspaper, The Empire, exclaimed, "and still they come." The writer went on to point out that progress was not limited to population statistics alone. The rate of construction had placed the city "second to none on the continent."<sup>13</sup> With such hopeful marks of progress as these, The Empire predicted an unlimited future for the city.

Toronto's rights as a first city in everything from industrial fairs to art exhibitions were jealously guarded. While Ottawa was grudgingly conceded to be the political capital of the country, Torontonians viewed their city as the real centre of industry and culture. Objections to the founding of the Royal Canadian Academy had been raised by some who feared that an Ottawa-based group might injure Toronto as an art centre.<sup>14</sup> Even after the Academy's institution the fact that Toronto was passed over as the location for one of the early exhibitions caused irate writers to suggest that the Academy would fail for lack of popular support.<sup>15</sup> As it became

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<sup>13</sup>Empire, 14 Dec. 1888.

<sup>14</sup>As a writer in the Globe who refuted such charges put it: "There seems to be in some quarters a fear lest the establishment of a Canadian academy with a perpetual exhibition may injure Toronto as an art centre. It is alleged that the Ottawa and Montreal Exhibitions have seemingly robbed us of some of our best artists." See: "Ontario Society of Artists," Globe, 17 May 1880, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup>"The Canadian Academy of Art," Globe, 6 July 1881, p. 4.

evident, however, that the Academy would enhance the city's cultural stance, it was supported with a high degree of enthusiasm.

From 1876 onward, Toronto's Canadian National Exhibition offered annual proof of the city's industrial achievements. By 1896, the newspapers proudly proclaimed that the Toronto fair "outclassed anything of the kind" since the Chicago World's Fair of 1893.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, the proliferation of local art societies offered proof that Toronto was a cultural centre. It was the home of the Ontario Society of Artists, a group largely responsible for the formation of the Royal Canadian Academy. The city became the base for Canada's first working class artists association: the Toronto Art Students League. Often credited with contributing to the establishment of a national spirit in art, the League would foster the development of artists who would later become members of the Group of Seven. Toronto was also the headquarters of the Women's Art Association. In addition, various other groups such as the Palette Club emerged in Toronto's fertile artistic climate.

Toronto was even acknowledged as the cultural centre of the country by no less a personage than Governor-General Lord Lansdowne. In opening the 1888 Royal Canadian Academy exhibition which took place in Toronto, Lansdowne referred to the city as the

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<sup>16</sup>"Feminine Fancyings/Kit Once More at the big Toronto Fair," Mail and Empire, 12 Sept. 1896, II, 1.

official home of the Academy.<sup>17</sup> (At one point, the Academy planned to make its permanent headquarters there.) For this reason, Lansdowne urged that Toronto should endeavour to have a permanent art gallery as soon as possible. Certainly, the rankling fact that the city did not have an official building it could call a gallery was repeatedly alluded to as a source of shame for a city with its pretensions.<sup>18</sup>

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Toronto was the major centre for book publishers and publications of literary, cultural, religious and commercial periodicals. Pelham Mulvany's handbook of Toronto Past And Present Until 1882 noted some fifty periodicals of various types emanating from Toronto publishing houses.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the various short-lived cultural periodicals which appeared from time to time, there were three which have been of prime importance to historians. Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review (1878-1882) was a continuation of The Canadian Monthly and National Review (1872-1878). The

<sup>17</sup>"At the Art Exhibition," Toronto Daily Mail, 8 May 1888, pp. 5 and 8.

<sup>18</sup>See, for example: "Toronto Art Gallery," Globe, 22 Oct. 1886, p. 4; "A Provincial Art Gallery," Globe, 24 Sept. 1895, p. 4; "Toronto's Museums," Mail and Empire, 29 July 1895, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup>C. Pelham Mulvany, Toronto: Past And Present (1884; rpt. Toronto: Ontario Reprint Press, 1970), pp. 199-209.

earlier magazine had been established as a voice for members of the Canada First Movement. Shortly after the demise of Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, The Week made its appearance on the Toronto scene (1883-1896). A third periodical, The Canadian Magazine, commenced in 1891 and lasted well into the twentieth century. As has been often noted, The Canadian Monthly and The Week bore the blessing of Toronto's Goldwin Smith and received large injections of financial assistance from him. From time to time, Smith also published his own journal The Bystander. Other important periodicals of the period included Saturday Night (1887- ) and Grip (1873 - 1892).

Of daily newspapers, Torontonians had an ample choice. Undoubtedly, the most influential was The Globe. Founded by George Brown some twenty-odd years before Confederation and promulgating Liberal political views, it reported a circulation of 24,000 in the early 1880s. In proportion to the population of both Toronto and English-speaking Canada, The Globe was described as having the largest relative circulation of any newspaper in the world.<sup>20</sup> Reportedly, it enjoyed an influence far beyond the borders of Canada. The Globe's chief competition came from the Toronto Daily Mail. Founded in 1872 to promote Conservative interests, it advertised a circulation of 14-16,000 in the early 1880s. In 1887, another

<sup>20</sup>Mulvany, p. 191.

Conservative paper was founded entitled The Empire. It merged with the Toronto Daily Mail in 1895 to form the Daily Mail and Empire. Other Toronto dailies included The Telegram, The World, and The News, and by the mid-nineties, the Toronto Star. The very number of newspapers obviously provided a vast potential source for the investigation of late nineteenth-century cultural history.

Having limited the study to the newspapers of Toronto, it became necessary to draw perimeters around a workable time period. The years 1880-1896 were chosen for study as a period in Canadian history in which questions of similar national concern affected both the political and cultural spheres of the country.

In 1880, the new Dominion was thirteen years old. The world-wide depression of the 1870s had left its mark upon Canada and the cautious political policies of the Liberal government under Alexander Mackenzie had not united the widely scattered provinces. Hence, the Conservatives under Sir John A. Macdonald had been returned to power in 1878 on a platform of economic nationalism known as the National Policy.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, the question of Canada's national future loomed large. By 1885, the railroad which was meant to unite the country was finished. However, in the very act of constructing the line, the government precipitated a crisis. The

Riel rebellion of 1885 divided the country on matters of race and religion. Riel was hanged, but his spectre haunted the Conservative party. Questions of provincial rights, the British connection, independence and annexation all became more crucial to the country. Goldwin Smith, a former Professor of History at Oxford, a well-known journalist and a resident of Toronto, summed up many of the issues in a book entitled Canada and the Canadian Question (1891). Thoughtful Canadians were forced to ponder their country's future.

In the cultural field, two national organizations were formed: the Royal Canadian Academy (1880) and the Royal Society of Canada (1882). As with the National Policy, these organizations were viewed as a means of moulding authors and artists from various parts of the country into a national unit. The Academy and the Society were also meant to endow Canada with the cultural dignity commensurate with nationhood.

Literary historians regard the work of four poets commonly known as the "Confederation Group," as the first flowerings of Canadian nationality. Their works appeared in the 1880s and 1890s. Charles G.D. Roberts' volume, Orion And Other Poems (1880) is often cited as the first landmark heralding this group. Likewise, the publication of the first post-confederation poetry anthology, Songs of the Great Dominion (1889), has been seen as a

watershed in the development of Canadian literature. Thus 1880 could be considered a good point of departure for this study.

At the other end of the spectrum, 1896 is sometimes marked as the year which "swept national feeling out of Canadian literature."<sup>21</sup> Certainly, around that time, authors became more concerned with delineating local colour rather than dealing with themes of national import.

In the field of visual arts, J. Russell Harper has noted that in the 1880s, painters expanded their vision of Canadian landscape until it encompassed the breadth and width of the Dominion.<sup>22</sup> The publication of Picturesque Canada (1882) is often viewed as a landmark of development in the arts. By the mid-nineties, however, Canadian landscape painting was diminishing in interest as Paris became the mecca of many Canadian artists.

In spite of such indicators, the perimeters remain arbitrary. One cannot point to 1880 as the date when a cultural revolution began or to 1896 as its finish. The development of literature and painting has been an evolutionary growth much like the development of the Canadian nation. And just as historians argue over the date

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<sup>21</sup>William H. Magee, "Local Colour in Canadian Fiction," in Twentieth Century Essays On Confederation Literature, ed. Lorraine McMullen (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1976), p. 81.

<sup>22</sup>J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 193-198.



of Canadian independence so they may argue over the date of literary and cultural beginnings. This thesis makes no contention as to beginnings and endings. It proposes to examine a period in Canada's development in which much was happening in the cultural field, and to examine how this ferment was reflected in society at large by means of the newspapers and journals.

In order to avoid echoing too closely the titles of either Bissell's or MacLulich's studies, the expression "late Victorian" has been used in the title to describe the period the dissertation discusses. It is simply used to denote a period of time rather than to imply any specific societal attitudes.

Other terms requiring definition include the words culture and literature. Culture is utilized in the narrow sense of the word. It describes the arts rather than the sum total of human enlightenment. Literature is used both in the general sense as the written productions of the human mind and, in the restricted sense, as belles-lettres. In the nineteenth century, references to literature tended to be to the broad meaning. For purposes of analysis, however, literature will refer to belles-lettres and, particularly, poetry and fiction.

Having narrowed the framework to Toronto and the time period to the sixteen years beginning with 1880 and ending with 1896, Toronto daily newspapers for the duration were scanned in

an effort to find articles pertaining to any facet of literature and painting. In the early 1880s, such material appeared only sporadically on any day of the week. However, by the 1890s, several papers had Saturday literary supplements which made the search somewhat more localized.

Although I did not know what I would find until the journals had been sifted, the resultant research fell into two main categories of foreign and Canadian cultural material. The bulk of this consisted of reviews of literature and art, biographical sketches, poetry selections, stories and art reproductions, as well as general editorials or features on the progress of various aspects of Canadian culture.

It was clear from the very bulk of material that the arts were intrinsically linked to the political and social environment of which they were a part. The challenge then became to develop a conceptual framework which would impose some order on this material. Since both Roy Daniells and Claude T. Bissell have asserted that the cultural periodicals offer the best index to Canadian taste at the time, a comparison of the materials in the dailies with that in the periodicals seemed to be one method of examining the social impact of Canadian literature and painting.<sup>23</sup> Reviewing this material in conjunction with personal correspondence, docu-

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<sup>23</sup>Bissell, p. 237; Daniells, p. 215.

ments such as the Minutes of various organizations and government publications made it possible to corroborate the information in the newspapers. In turn, this permitted a larger view of the cultural scene as viewed from Toronto in the late nineteenth century.

Various themes began to emerge, in particular, questions of patronage, economics and protection, aesthetic education and cultural nationalism. Other questions began to be raised. Why did the established academic critics of the period indicate that the daily newspapers ignored the presence of Canadian authors and painters when my research into newspapers indicated this was not true? Why did the writers in the periodicals view the public as Philistine when it seemed the newspaper writers did not? There also seemed to be a conflict between the argument that society had not advanced enough to support the arts and the argument that society's materialism detracted from an interest in the arts. Was the pro-British attitude of periodical critics shared by writers in the newspapers? Did reviewers in the periodicals and newspapers share the same critical attitudes to authors and painters? What role were creative artists and critics meant to play in the development of Canadian society? What were the values critics expected authors and painters to reflect to society? Such questions formed the background to the development of the thesis.

In effect, these problems centred around the relationship between the artist and his society. No matter what the author wrote or the artist painted, he was a creature of his time. He was bound either to reflect or to react to the attitudes of his age. Biographical studies have enabled us to gain insights into the creator's view of his cultural milieu. Research into the intellectual and cultural background of the nineteenth century has promoted an understanding of those segments of society most likely to be responsive to the creative artist. Yet, there is still room for a study which examines the bond between the artist and society from the perspective of society at large as filtered through the medium of that society—the newspapers.

There are six chapters to the dissertation. Chapter I surveys the scope and contents of Toronto newspapers and major cultural periodicals utilized as resource materials. It examines their utility as historical evidence. Questions of political bias, tone, canons of accuracy, and news colouration are considered in order to determine the authority of newspapers in reconstructing the past. Chapter II examines the relationships of those engaged in the cultural arena with each other and with society at large. The chapter is particularly concerned with three things: the types of patronage or cultural "promotion," the cross-currents within the cultural ranks, and how these were communicated abroad. It

questions whether the picture of these disinterested altruists bringing Arnold's "sweetness and light" to society has not been over-idealized. Were they not simply concerned with succeeding in their chosen professions?

The third chapter investigates another aspect of the affinity between those involved in the arts and society: one which centres on economic questions, particularly, the problem of protection. It inquires whether the protectionist impulse manifested in the professions and trades of the period extended into the area of cultural endeavour? If it did, what were the effects?

Chapters IV and V examine actual newspaper coverage of literature and painting in reviews and exhibitions. Through a comparison of material in the newspapers with that in concurrent periodicals, these chapters will evaluate the scope and critical judgements contained in the newspapers. In so doing, the chapters will assess the accuracy of statements made by late nineteenth-century authors and critics that the newspapers either ignored Canadian cultural productions or treated all such work with the same uncritical stock phrases.

Chapter VI deals with the crucial question of aesthetic tastes and critical standards. It investigates the charge made by the periodical writers that the newspapers manifested a Philistine mentality toward the arts. It compares the attitudes of the period-

icals and the dailies to the arts and to the public's aesthetic sensibilities. Thus, it attempts to determine whether the newspapers and their readers were indeed the total Philistines the periodical writers have portrayed them to be.

Throughout, the focus is on the newspapers: agent of the intersection between the thought of the elite and that of the general public; arena of the encounter; and recorder of the results. Sara Jeannette Duncan, often considered an astute observer of the Toronto scene in the 1880s, alleged that politics and vituperation were the sole newspaper diet of the population of Ontario.<sup>24</sup> This thesis seeks to inquire into the validity of such a charge and to provide a larger understanding of the actual role played by Toronto newspapers in the development of literature and painting in the years 1880-1896. In so doing, perhaps we may better understand the sources of some of our modern attitudes in the twin fields of cultural endeavour.

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<sup>24</sup>"Saunterings," Week, 30 Sept. 1886, pp. 707-08.

## CHAPTER I

### TORONTO AND THE FOURTH ESTATE: CHARACTER, ATTITUDES AND CONTENT

Politics and vituperation, temperance and vituperation, religion and vituperation; these three dietetic articles, the vituperative sauce invariably accompanying, form the exclusive journalistic pabulum of three-quarters of the people of Ontario.

Sara Jeannette Duncan,  
The Week, 1886.<sup>1</sup>

Toronto newspapers during the years 1880-1896 provided their readers with a wide variety of reading material. In addition to the local and international news of the day, the newspapers provided material on topics of economic, historical, social and cultural interest. Contrary to the claims made by various commentators such as Graeme Mercer Adam, John George Bourinot and Sara Jeannette Duncan, the daily newspapers were not a nefarious Canadian institution inimical to the development of a national culture. While party politics and denominational religious issues no doubt provided spice within the pages of various journals, to suggest, however, that they formed the major journalistic diet of Toronto newspapers in the eighties and nineties is at best a reductionist view. It is time to balance the record with a comparative

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<sup>1</sup>"Saunterings," Week, 30 Sept. 1886, pp. 707-08.

survey of the character and scope of the various Toronto newspapers and cultural periodicals publishing in the years 1880-1896.

This examination will test the reliability of these newspapers as historical evidence. Criteria outlined in Allan Nevin's The Gateway to History and Lucy Salmon's seminal study The Newspaper and the Historian will be utilized for this purpose.<sup>2</sup> A short historical background of the various newspapers will be then followed with an account of their external appearance and content.

In the 1880s and 90s, Toronto newspaper publishers gradually introduced a number of new machines of the advancing industrial age. The web press, the stereotype machine and the folding and cutting machine transformed newspapers. With the increasing capitalization needed to support these ventures, the old one-man printer-publisher-editor figure gradually became replaced by the modern joint stock company.

The oldest Toronto newspaper, in 1880, was The Globe.<sup>3</sup> When it had commenced daily publishing in 1853, George Brown had a staff of three and the paper was produced on a Hoe single-cylinder press. By 1880 the staff had grown to 250 people, and in April of

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<sup>2</sup>The Gateway To History, rev. ed. (1938, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963); The Newspaper and the Historian (New York: Oxford, 1923).

<sup>3</sup>Cited hereafter as Globe.



that year the paper was transformed. While Brown literally was lying on his death bed, a Bullock web press, which printed both sides of a page and was capable of producing up to 18,000 copies an hour, turned out its first edition.<sup>4</sup>

The web press facilitated a movement from a variable column width of eight to ten columns, to an easier-read six-column page. In lieu of the old four-page format, it had an enlarged page capacity varying from eight to sixteen pages.

Such changes, of course, meant an increased capacity for printed material. Even in party organs, this meant an increase in the amount of space devoted to articles of a non-political type. Local and international news proliferated. New departments opened and as Canadian productions in the cultural fields increased in the 1880s and 1890s, so did the space allotted to them.

The paper's motto had come from the letters of Junius: "The subject who is truly loyal to the Chief Magistrate will neither advise nor submit to arbitrary measures."<sup>5</sup>

Under George Brown the Globe had been a reform paper. Brown's untimely demise did not change the Globe's political stance. Shortly after Brown's death, his brother Gordon became managing director. Announcing the appointment, the Globe reiterated its

<sup>4</sup>"A New Departure. 'The Globe' and its Printing Machinery," Globe, 15 April 1880, pp. 6-7.

<sup>5</sup>See Globe mastheads.

long-held editorial stance:

As to the principles and policy of the Globe it seems to be only necessary to say that what they have been in the past, they will continue in the future. The Globe will be an independent journal, advocating the principles of the Reform Party. Freedom of Trade, Economy and Honesty in Public Expenditure, a Land Policy in the Northwest based on Actual Settlement, construction of the Pacific Railway without due haste or burdensome delay, and British connection will be the chief planks of the platform. Temperance, morality and religion will as ever call forth its best efforts.<sup>6</sup>

While Gordon Brown only remained in control for two years, subsequent management always emphasized similar principles. Editors in the 1880s and 1890s were John Cameron and John Willison.

John Cameron (1843-1908) had a long background of journalistic experience. Prior to his connection with the Globe, he had formerly been with the London Advertiser and the Toronto Liberal. In its short career (1875-76), the latter paper was the voice for the Blake wing of the Liberal party. Cameron's successor, John Willison (1856-1927), knighted in 1913, began his journalistic career on the London Advertiser. Shortly thereafter, he joined the Globe as a parliamentary reporter. In 1890, when he was promoted to Editor-in-Chief of the Globe, Willison was President of the Parliamentary Press Gallery. In later years, he was to

<sup>6</sup> "To The Friends And Readers of the Globe," Globe, 14 May 1880, p. 4.

become editor of the News.<sup>7</sup>

The Globe's chief competition at the beginning of 1880 came from the Mail. Founded by a Tory syndicate in 1872, the Mail was established as a three-cent morning paper to offset the reform opinions of the Globe.<sup>8</sup> Its original prospectus stated in part:

The proprietors of the Company have undertaken to establish par excellence a newspaper, which while giving expression to the views of moderate Politicians as opposed to violent and revolutionary assailants of the Constitution will take its stand as a bonafide commercial enterprise with a capital enabling it to set at naught the charge of being the retained still less the subsidized organ of the state.<sup>9</sup>

Suffering as a result of the vicissitudes of the Conservatives in the 1870s, the Mail was eventually sold to John Riorden, a St. Catharines paper manufacturer and chief creditor of the Mail. Riorden reorganized the paper as a joint stock company.<sup>10</sup>

Like the Globe at the commencement of its career, the Mail had been printed on a four-page folio sheet. Even with these

<sup>7</sup>Unless noted otherwise, biographical information throughout the thesis is based on Henry Morgan, Canadian Men and Women of the Time (Toronto: 1898 and 1912); and W. Stewart Wallace, The Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1945).

<sup>8</sup>Canadian Press Association, A History of Canadian Newspapers (Toronto: 1908), p. 169.

<sup>9</sup>Mail, 30 March 1872.

<sup>10</sup>J. Middleton, ed., The Municipality of Toronto a History (Toronto: Dominion Publishing Co., 1923), I, 428.

original space limitations, the first prospectus had promised that in addition to politics, the Mail's contents would include material on the arts, sciences, social and literary topics. Its motto was taken from Burke: "Not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, But the General Good."<sup>11</sup>

A few months after the Globe, the Mail also acquired a web press. On August 2, 1880, the first edition was printed by their new Scott web press. In addition to the increased size, the Mail was printed by stereotyping with much larger print and spacing than hithertofore. The paper's name was also changed to the Toronto Daily Mail.<sup>12</sup> In an editorial address, "To The Public," the Mail announced that it was now not only the largest and greatest paper in Canada, but also that it compared favourably "with the best in the United States." The Mail also reaffirmed its political stance and asserted its independence from political control:

A word now as to our political programme.  
The Mail will continue . . . to give its support to the Conservative party; but in politics

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<sup>11</sup>The original prospectus read a "daily paper without politics would be like a dish without seasoning, but in the effort to provide its readers with all the political news of the day . . . the Mail will not lose sight of the other innumerable subjects of interest to the great reading public. The Arts and Sciences and Social and Literary topics will be popularly treated, as discoveries and the events of the times may suggest." Mail, 30 March 1872.

<sup>12</sup>Cited hereafter as Mail.

as in every other matter, it has no master to serve except its duty to the public interests. Its opinion shall be given freely, and without respect of persons: and it will endeavour to discuss public questions with calmness, fairness and a profound respect for the right of every man in this free country to think for himself. It has no favours to ask either from friend or foe, and looks for its future success only to its own merits as a newspaper. . . . 13

The Mail continued to support the Conservative party until 1885 when it became independent due to its criticism of the Conservative handling of the Riel Rebellion. 14

Editors in the period 1880-1896 included: Edward Farrar, Martin Griffin and Arthur Wallis. 15 Griffin (1847-1921), a former editor of the Halifax Express, was editor of the Mail from 1881 to 1885, whereupon he was appointed parliamentary librarian.

Wallis (1854-1929), who began his career as a practical printer, joined the Mail as a reporter, became editor in 1890, and retained the position until 1911.

Following the Mail's break with John A. Macdonald's party, the Conservatives were without a newspaper voice in Toronto. In order to remedy this, yet another attempt at a party organ was

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<sup>13</sup> Mail, 2 August 1880.

<sup>14</sup> Middleton, I, 425-26.

<sup>15</sup> Canadian Press Association, p. 170.

undertaken. In 1887, The Empire was founded.<sup>16</sup> Its political bias was aptly reflected in its title.<sup>17</sup> Managed by David Creighton, John Livingstone and, subsequently, by A.H. U. Colquhoun the paper lasted only eight years.<sup>18</sup> An article in the News noted that the Empire's difficulties were not due to poor management. Rather, the News felt that the Empire suffered because it was a party organ:

The Empire was issued as a party organ just as the day for party organs had passed. The Mail was already independent and the Globe was taking an independent Liberal course. The World was Independent Conservative, while the News was wholly untrammelled by party ties and the Telegram at least partially so. The people were thus being educated at the time the Empire appeared to look down on party subserviency in newspapers.<sup>19</sup>

Certainly the market was already overcrowded when the Empire made its appearance. Thus, in 1895, the paper merged

<sup>16</sup>Cited hereafter as Empire.

<sup>17</sup>In an introductory editorial entitled "About Ourselves" the Empire declared itself "pro-protection," and "Liberal-Conservative." It went on to state: "The Empire will maintain that in no clime, under no form of government, in no period of the world's history, have there been found five millions of people living more happily or enjoying greater prosperity, possessing greater civil or religious advantages, or with a more satisfactory future assured for them and their descendants than the people who now inhabit the Dominion of Canada." Empire, 27 December 1887.

<sup>18</sup>Middleton, I, 426.

<sup>19</sup>"The Newspapers of the Queen City," News, 14 July 1894, p. 10.

with the Mail to form the Daily Mail and Empire.<sup>20</sup> Amalgamation served to cement the conservative air of the two newspapers, an aura maintained well into the twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> Prior to the Empire's establishment, three other newspapers had appeared on the Toronto scene.

The first, The Telegram, was founded in 1876 by John Ross Robertson with financial assistance from Goldwin Smith.<sup>22</sup> An evening paper devoted to presenting "today's news today," its prospectus announced that the Telegram was "a newspaper not an organ," and it would have "no patron but the public."<sup>23</sup> A four-page sheet, it devoted much of its space to municipal news. John C. Dent (1841-1888), a journalist and Canadian historian, was the first editor. He was followed by A. F. Pirie and later John R. Robinson, a reporter. One of the main innovations of the Telegram was to undercut its rivals by offering classified advertising at one cent a word, the prevailing rate being double. Consequently, advertising formed almost half the print space of the

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<sup>20</sup>Cited hereafter as Mail and Empire.

<sup>21</sup>Middleton stated: "There is a conservative spirit even in the Manager's office for the make-up of the paper is as the law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not." I, 426.

<sup>22</sup>Cited hereafter as Telegram.

<sup>23</sup>Ronald Poulton, The Paper Tyrant (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1971), p. 72.

four-page paper.<sup>24</sup>

In 1880, four years after the Telegram was founded, The Toronto World appeared as an "independent" journal, although its leanings were Conservative.<sup>25</sup> Advertising itself as a "one cent" paper, the World was published and edited throughout most of its career by William Findlay MacLean (1854-1929), a Conservative Member of Parliament for East and later South York. An 1887 statement of policy noted in part:

The World is trying its best . . . to reflect the opinions of the Canadian people to build up the sentiment of Canadian nationality, to inculcate the idea that Canadians must have confidence in themselves and their country, and that if we only keep on in our own way, minding our own business, we shall soon become a powerful nation.

We do not want very sudden changes in our political system—such as annexation or Imperial federation. Let us keep to our present line, gradually and surely simplifying the system under which we live.<sup>26</sup>

A third journal, The Evening News, began in 1881 as an evening edition of the Mail.<sup>27</sup> The salutary editorial noted that it

<sup>24</sup>Middleton, I, 426.

<sup>25</sup>Cited hereafter as World. Middleton noted that the paper began life as Independent Liberal and then switched to Independent Conservative. Middleton, I, 428.

<sup>26</sup>"What the World is Doing," World, 18 May 1887.

<sup>27</sup>Although it began as an evening paper, the News later had various editions signified by differing titles. Cited hereafter as News.



would support the Liberal-Conservative administration in its general policy of protection and western development. However, as an independent paper, it reserved the right to criticise weak or unsatisfactory aspects of that policy. As to politics in general, the News stated,

We know of no good reason why politics should be made the chief end of men. Consequently, while taking the liberty to express from time to time such views as we may form upon the political issues of the day, we shall not devote to the discussion thereof any space for which we can find better use.<sup>28</sup>

In 1883, the News was sold to Edmund Ernest Sheppard (1855-1924). A journalist and author, Sheppard edited the News for four years. Under his tenure, the News had a forward-looking democratic platform. It advocated, among other things, an elective senate; abolition of the federal veto over provincial legislation, and a revision of the Constitution to define federal and provincial powers more strictly.<sup>29</sup>

A long libel suit arising out of the Riel Rebellion finally forced Sheppard to sell the paper in November, 1887.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup>"Salutatory," News, 2 May 1881.

<sup>29</sup>"The News Policy," News, 26 November 1883. C. P. Mulvany notes that when the News first appeared it was generally viewed as simply an evening edition of the Mail. However, after the advent of Sheppard a "very marked change took place . . . in the political attitude of this paper . . . it began to develop an independent, not to say audacious, advocacy of Canadian nationality." Toronto Past And Present, pp. 194-97.

<sup>30</sup>"Valedictory," News, 23 November 1887.

Subsequently, Sheppard founded Saturday Night.

A small paper in its early years, often composed of two pages, the News gradually increased its size. In 1892, a Scott web press and stereotyping equipment were purchased. In an hour, this press could turn out an 8-page paper of up to 24,000 copies. According to the News, the new equipment enabled the paper to be circulated in just ten minutes after the material had left the composing room.<sup>31</sup>

Even with all these daily journals, new competition entered the field in November, 1893. A printers' strike at the News resulted in the founding of the Evening Star. The printers, desiring to get their views before the public, banded together to publish a rival paper. Through an arrangement with the World, the early editions of the Star came off the press. The paper, however, did not flourish and the venture floundered. In its first three years, the paper changed ownership and editors several times, but it continued to lose money. Late in 1899, its fortunes turned when J.E. Atkinson, then editor of the Montreal Herald, took over the paper and gave it the firm foundation which would enable it to outlive most of its predecessors.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>"On Our New Press," News, 18 August 1892, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup>Ross Harkness, J.E. Atkinson of the Star (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963).

These Toronto newspapers were all journals which undertook the publishing business in a serious, business-like manner. Subscription rates were published and were payable in advance; classified terms were printed and were payable in advance; classified terms were printed and were accepted only at the editors' discretion; anonymous letters to the editor were not accepted, although a nom-de-plume could be used for publishing purposes. Names of the various journals indicated their earnestness. Their titles revealed either an interest in man's cosmic relationships or a desire to fulfil a news function.<sup>33</sup>

None of the newspapers carried headlines as we think of them today. Crossheads rarely appeared and the print was not the heavy black boldface that is common today. Rather, articles were summarized in a series of short topics at the article's beginning. The first statement was usually in the largest print available, while subsequent themes were in ever-decreasing size.<sup>34</sup>

Advertising, of course, was an important element in the makeup of all the papers. Following the form of British news-

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<sup>33</sup>Lucy Salmon stated that such criteria determine the authority of the press. Salmon, pp. 34-80.

<sup>34</sup>Salmon has suggested that a headline can have two functions. It can reflect a desire to indicate the actual content of an article or it can exploit its content by sensational wording and type size. Because of the limited varieties of type, editors were obviously constrained to minimize the sensation. Salmon, p. 52.

papers, classifieds were usually placed on page one in the early eighties. By 1896, however, with the exception of the Telegram, most advertising had been moved to the inside pages.

There were few illustrations throughout the greater part of the 1880s. The few that appeared were line drawings sketched by newspaper artists. At the end of the decade, photoengraving was being gradually introduced, the Mail and the Globe being the earliest to utilize this process. All in all, the external appearance of Toronto newspapers was one which emphasized respectability.

In addition to the external appearance the reliability of a journal can be further assessed by evaluating proportion: how a journal utilizes its space. Of the total space devoted to content, what amount is devoted to serious questions concerning politics, religion, science and art in relation to each other and, more particularly, in relation to the amount of space devoted to gossip and scandal? Secondly, what position in the paper is given to these various questions? In yellow journalism, for example, items relating to scandal are headlined on the front page. Conversely a serious periodical often begins with an editorial.<sup>35</sup> While such questions are difficult to assess without a reliable sampling, several observations can be based on a scan of the sixteen-year period

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<sup>35</sup> Salmon, pp. 34-80

undertaken in this study.

If we accept the views of either John George Bourinot or Sara Jeannette Duncan, sports and advertising were reported at the expense of cultural events.<sup>36</sup> At this distance in time, however, Bourinot's and Duncan's criticisms should be weighed against such dispassionate evidence as the fact that art exhibitions were not only reported by most newspapers, but they were often featured on page one. Books were not only discussed in the literary columns, but were often the subject of articles on the editorial page. Public lectures and sermons were often reported verbatim. In addition, economic and social questions of the moment were discussed at length.

At the same time, gossip and scandal occupied their share of space within the pages of the various journals. Further, sensational events were reported at length with all the blood and gore possible. We are justified in suspecting that the Victorians, who espoused a highly respectable domestic society, had a vicarious interest in the catastrophes and moral failings which befell others. Even the Week, with all its lofty pretensions, was guilty of purvey-

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<sup>36</sup> Bourinot described newspapers as a "reflex of the average rather than the higher intelligence of the country" and cited as evidence the large proportion of space devoted to sports in comparison with the small amount of space devoted to cultural items. See: "Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness," (1893, rpt. Clara Thomas ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 52.

ing scandal. On at least one occasion, it was censored by the dailies for becoming a "cultural scandal-monger."<sup>37</sup>

Each journal's doctrinaire sense of personal infallibility was similarly responsible for a frequent breach of good manners. Vituperation often was an essential ingredient in articles in each newspaper which discussed political or religious views which differed with the particular journal's own. This was also apparent in references to competing journals. In 1874, Nicholas Flood Davin had criticized Canadian newspapers for their vituperative spirit. A lawyer and journalist who had immigrated to Canada in 1872 and subsequently was associated with both the Globe and the Mail, Davin described the deficiencies of the Canadian press in this regard:

There is a tendency to personality, a want of adequate respect for the sacredness of private life, and a readiness to introduce political feeling into spheres having nothing to do with politics. Thus one paper tries to prove that the size of a man's nose, or the cut of his beard, or his clothes, are serious impediments to his statesmanship; another

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<sup>37</sup>The News reprimanded the Week for an article on Ottawa society which pointed out why Princess Louise had been unfavourably impressed with Canada: "It is not necessary that every incident of the character recorded by the Week with such gusto should be published, even if it is true. Still less necessary, to serve any good purpose, is it that such incidents should be raked up years after they have transpired, and published in such a vague and indefinite form as may excite suspicions and reflect discredit upon innocent parties." See: "A 'Cultured' Scandal-Monger," News, 11 November 1884.

judges of a person's fitness for weighing  
butter by the colour of his political creed.<sup>38</sup>

Certainly, Davin's assessment was true of both the Globe and the Mail in the 1870s. Under George Brown and T.C. Patterson, rancour was the prevalent manner in dealing with people and ideas to which the journals were opposed. By the 1890s, this spirit was gradually decreasing as newspapers began to assume a somewhat more impersonal tone. For example, an 1894 article in the News discussed the history and operation of the various "Newspapers of the Queen City." The discussion is characterized by a fair and just appraisal of all the newspapers which were competitors to the News.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, in his unpublished history of the Globe, M.O. Hammond noted that, as editor of the Globe, J.S. Willison was responsible for removing much of its partisan spirit.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, it has been suggested that the editor's personality is reflected in the general attitude to questions of the day.<sup>41</sup>

Editors such as E.E. Sheppard and R.W. Phipps were flamboyant,

<sup>38</sup>"The London And Canadian Press," Canadian Monthly, 5 (Feb. 1874), 129.

<sup>39</sup>News, 14 July 1894, p. 10.

<sup>40</sup>"Ninety Years of the Globe," TS, pp. 189-90. Hammond Papers, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>41</sup>Salmon, pp. 252-4.

outspoken characters whose personalities certainly were reflected in the tone of the journals they edited. While the personalities of such men as John Cameron and Martin J. Griffin would also have been imprinted on their journals, there was one essential difference. Because the World and the News were so much smaller than either the Globe or the Mail, the editors' actual journalistic output formed a larger proportion of their papers' content than was possible in either the Globe or the Mail.

Of course, as the majority of articles were unsigned, most of the time it is impossible to know with any certainty who the authors were. This is compounded by a lack of extant staff records.<sup>42</sup> Some well-known names have survived the ravages of time, however: E.W. Thomson, the author of Old Man Savarin and other works, was employed by the Globe from 1878 to 1891 and was lead writer from 1886.<sup>43</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan was also employed by the Globe in the 1880s. Writing under the pseudonym, Garth Grafton, Duncan edited the Women's Page from about 1886 to 1888. E.W. Schuch was drama critic between 1883-

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<sup>42</sup>In 1892, a disastrous fire destroyed the Globe building and carried with it all the records to that date. The librarian of the present Globe and Mail also states that the records of the Empire and the Mail are no longer extant.

<sup>43</sup>Bernard Thomson (son of E.W. Thomson), letter to M.O. Hammond dated 18 Nov. 1928. Hammond Papers, MU3385, Series 10J, Archives of Ontario.



1892. Laura B. Durand was a book reviewer in the 1890s.<sup>44</sup>  
Bernard McEvoy was on the staff of the Mail and Empire in the 1890s.<sup>45</sup>

In addition, newspapers engaged the services of special correspondents. Called the chameleons of the press, special correspondents were engaged on a freelance basis to report on various subjects of special interest.<sup>46</sup> In the fields of literature and art, correspondents included such names as G. Mercer Adam, formerly editor of Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review; Thomas Conant, author of Life in Canada (1903); Harriet Ford, a painter; T. Arnold Haultain, best known perhaps for being private secretary to Goldwin Smith; E. Pauline Johnson, the Indian poet; and Professor James Mavor, formerly editor of the British periodical, Scottish Art Review, and professor of political economy at the University of Toronto.<sup>47</sup>

Other writers were engaged on a freelance basis. For example, Ethelwyn Wetherald, an Ontario-born author of five

<sup>44</sup>Hammond, *passim*.

<sup>45</sup>J. Russell Harper, Early Painters and Engravers in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 207.

<sup>46</sup>Some special correspondents were unpaid. Salmon noted that clergymen, lawyers, scholars, etc., often were glad to have a channel for their opinions and thus wrote articles gratis. Salmon, p. 181.

<sup>47</sup>Names noted while reading through various papers.

5 volumes of poetry and co-author of the romance, An Algonquin Maiden, contributed miscellaneous articles to the Globe in this manner. Years later, Wetherald was to describe her writing experiences with the Globe. Her first articles were unsolicited and she was content simply to see them published. A few weeks later she received a letter from the editor, John Cameron, asking her what her terms were. When these were established at a dollar and a half a column, she was engaged to forward material three times a week, and thus the "Bel Thistlewaite" column was established.<sup>48</sup>

All these writers contributed to newspapers which were changing their appearance and evolving their contents throughout the late nineteenth century. The changes were dramatic. E.B. Biggar (1853-1921), an Ontario journalist and author of an Anecdotal Life of Sir John Macdonald (1891), remarked upon the variety and sophistication of 1890s newspapers compared with their pioneer predecessors. Although Biggar used the 1790s content of the Montreal Gazette as an example of the differences in content to those of the 1890s, his comments apply equally well to early Toronto papers:

... editorials it had none; of local news there was but the smallest quantity, on

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<sup>48</sup>E. Wetherald, letter to M.O. Hammond, dated 23 Feb. 1928. Hammond Papers, Archives of Ontario.

an average not more than twenty lines a week. Birth and marriage notices . . . were not permitted. . . . Even death notices were limited to persons of distinction. The correspondents very seldom discussed local or even live matters. Column after column was filled with articles six or eight months old, clipped from other newspapers or copied from old magazines. Official proclamations, correspondence, etc. were published in extenso with all their tedious verbosity. Only two departments the newspaper of a century ago and the newspaper of today possessed in common—shipping news and advertising.<sup>49</sup>

The telegraph had made it possible for newspapers to receive information quickly; the train made it possible for subscribers in outlying districts to receive their newspaper promptly. The Globe made novel use of this product of the Canadian industrial age. In 1887, the "Globe Train" was launched. This train, composed of a locomotive and a single car, raced to the western city of London, arriving with the latest edition of the Globe in time to meet connecting trains going to the western extremities of the province.<sup>50</sup> Thanks to the railway, newspapers printed in Toronto could reach the outlying sections of the province within hours. Thus their information became the possession and concern of those far beyond the metropolitan reaches of the city.

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<sup>49</sup>E. B. Biggar, "Sketch of Canadian Journalism," Canadian Newspaper Directory (Montreal: McKim, 1892), p. 22.

<sup>50</sup>"The Globe Special Train," Globe, 2 Nov. 1887, p. 2; and Hammond TS, p. 169.

And what was the type of information those far and near received? Nicholas Flood Davin described the contents of the Globe and the Mail as comparing favourably with the best provincial papers in England. As to their contents, Davin stated: "... every possible subject is discussed: Canadian, English, American and European politics; art and science; all the ten thousand topics thrown to the surface by the seethings of a complex society."<sup>51</sup>

The contents reflected a variety of inherited and emerging forms: essays on various morals and manners topics in the manner of Addison and Steele; the serialized novel in the fashion of Dickens; letters to the Editor reminiscent of those in the Times; poetry that ranged from work in the classical high tradition to verse of a quasi-religious nature. Extracts from Hansard and the Government Gazette were often printed.

New departments developed in response to changing societal demands. Ned Hanlan's spectacular rowing feats resulted in such sports events becoming a regular feature of Toronto journals. Women's expanding role was reflected in the addition of a Women's Page—a feature which attracted a widespread male readership as well.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Davin, p. 126.

<sup>52</sup>When the Mail hired "Kit" Coleman to edit a Women's Page, they little dreamed that Wilfrid Laurier would become one of her many avid male readers. See: Ted Ferguson, Kit Coleman Queen of Hearts (Toronto: Doubleday, 1978), p. 7.

The advent of royalty on Canadian shores, in the person of Princess Louise, wife of the Marquis of Lorne, Governor-General of Canada between 1880-1883, sparked an interest in society and fashion reportage. This, in turn, revealed the disparity between aspirations in that direction and the puritanical attitudes and gaucheness of Canadian society.

Improved techniques in illustration resulted in the half-tone engraving which added pictorial interest to the printed page. Among other things this permitted paintings to be reproduced, thus permitting large numbers of people to obtain an idea of a particular work of art even if they were far removed from a gallery or exhibition.

The demand for entertainment and cultural information was fulfilled in several ways. With the introduction of the syndicated novel and short story, Canadian newspapers were able to publish the latest literary material. Journals also reprinted articles from foreign newspapers that dealt with topics on Canadian cultural matters.<sup>53</sup> In addition, the dailies capsulated the material contained in the most recent number of the various British, American

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<sup>53</sup> See, for example: "Art In Canada/Faults of Canadian Artists as Found By an American Critic," a reprint of an article from the Brooklyn Eagle in Globe, 25 Oct. 1883, p. 3; or "Canadian Art/ A Glasgow Criticism of Ont. Painters," a reprint from the Glasgow Herald in Mail, 3 Jan. 1884, p. 5.

and Canadian periodicals.<sup>54</sup> The interview with famous personalities, an American invention, was often employed by the Toronto newspapers. The travelogue brought the world, especially the new Canadian West, to the reader's doorstep as clerics, writers, painters, and politicians returned accounts of their travels through the new territories.

Most famous of these travelogues was perhaps the accounts sent to the Globe by "Buckboard" Williams, a special correspondent with the group who accompanied Lord Lorne on his tour of the West in 1881. Unlike the press corps which follows public figures today, Williams had to make all his own arrangements for accompanying the Governor-General. Hence the title "Buckboard," as Williams shifted for himself with wagon, guide and camping equipment.<sup>55</sup>

Less famous, but more entertaining, was a mock travelogue co-authored by the Indian poet E. Pauline Johnson and Owen E. Smiley, titled: "There and Back" by "Miss Poetry and Mr. Prose."<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup>When the magazine contained work by a Canadian, or reviewed the work of a Canadian, they were noted with enthusiasm. For example: a Mail article noticed a Scribner's number which featured Duncan Campbell Scott's "In the Village of Viger" under "Current Literary Topics." Mail, 15 Oct. 1887, p. 6. Similarly, the Globe summarized an Atheneum reviewer's comments on Carman: Globe, 11 May 1895. This was a common practice throughout the whole sixteen year period under review.

<sup>55</sup>Hammond, pp. 135-36.

<sup>56</sup>"There and Back," Globe, 15 Dec. 1894, p. 17.

More usual was an account by Harriet Ford. A painter, she described a trip through Quebec in picturesque language and accompanied it with her own sketches.<sup>57</sup>

Efforts were made to provide informed accounts on various questions of the day. The Globe, for instance, ran a series of articles by Henry George, the controversial author of Progress and Poverty on "Protection and Free Trade." Likewise, the Globe sent its own commissioner to New Brunswick to report on the growth and industries of this eastern Province. Naturally, the scenic railway trip itself was a highlight of the article. Sketches, which accompanied the newspaper report, were by C.W. Jeffreys, an Ontario artist.<sup>58</sup>

Interest in the development of the various parts of Ontario resulted in the Telegram's "Landmarks of Ontario" series and a similar series in the Mail and Empire entitled "Towns of Ontario."

News of the day, of course, received its share of space. Items of local, national and international interest shared space here. Such "news" articles consisted of the unusual and the sensational and were designed to attract the eye and capture the imagination of the reader. Then as now, murders and assassinations were

<sup>57</sup>"Quebec Wanderings," Mail and Empire, 25 July 1896, p. 19; "In Quebec Province," Mail and Empire, 29 Aug. 1896, II, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup>"In The East," Globe, 26 April 1890, p. 2.

always highlighted.

Bloody stories such as the famous Donnelly murders were startling events early in 1880. While the public was still coming to grips with the news from Biddulph, a story even closer to Torontonians diverted their reading interest. This was the fatal shooting of George Brown, owner and publisher of the Globe. A year later when James Abram Garfield, the new American president, was similarly felled by an assassin's bullet, the newspapers devoted much of their space to the event.

Neither Brown nor Garfield died immediately and so the public was treated to daily physicians' reports of their condition as they battled death for weeks and then, finally, succumbed to the fatal wounds. When the end had come, heavy black framing lines heralded their passing to the reading public.

Deaths of notable figures were always events to be marked. The passing of such political figures as Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir John Thompson were accorded prominence because of their contributions to the Canadian political scene. Tributes were also rendered on the occasion of the deaths of such international literary figures as Alfred Tennyson, J. Greenleaf Whittier and Walt Whitman. In the bizarre fashion of the Victorians, the papers catered to this preoccupation with death even to the extent of a page one feature on the death of Jumbo, Barnum's fore-



most elephant.<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, the papers catered to the sentimental vein expressed in stories of love and passion. Unrequited love and infidelity were the sine qua non of such stories, equalled only by crimes of passion and romantic tales of runaway lovers or unusual matches.<sup>60</sup>

Literature and art presented a minor but significant percentage of this content. Articles on art societies had been featured since their inception and, as art societies and exhibitions proliferated, a due increase in newspaper content was reflected.

Canadian literary efforts appeared either in "notes" columns, where they received publishing notices, or in reviews where they were considered at length. Biographical sketches of artists and literary people were a feature of more than one newspaper in the nineties. In addition, Canadian fiction and poetry appeared from time to time. Special Christmas editions particularly featured the

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<sup>59</sup>Tennyson's impending end and his actual death are typical of these: "Waits At The River/The Laureate Stands on the Shore by the Crystal Tide/Tarrying for the Silent Boatman to Row Him O'er/The Dark Waters Are Lapping the Sand at his very feet," News, 5 Oct. 1892. "Has Crossed the Dark River," News, 6 Oct. 1892. See also: "Jumbo's Death/The Circumstances Attending the Great Elephant's Death/His Career Sketched," Globe, 17 Sept. 1885, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup>Examples might include "Pocahantas: The Romantic Story of Her Love For Smith and Her Disappointment," Mail, 7 Nov. 1884. "Sketch of Princess Montregro and Her Dwarf Fiancé," Globe, 3 Oct. 1896. "A Woman's Jealousy/Vitriol Thrown In A Rival's Face," Mail, 15 Jan. 1885, p. 2.

work of Canadians.

Around 1890, with the advent of the Saturday supplement, the literary and artistic material in the newspapers began to rival that appearing in periodicals.<sup>61</sup> The supplement of at least two dailies often had a frontispiece which featured reproductions of works of art, a large number of them by Canadians.<sup>62</sup> On other occasions, Canadian poems such as C. G. D. Roberts' "Ode for the Canadian Confederacy" were presented in flowing calligraphy.<sup>63</sup> Within the pages of the supplement were often found features on Ontario's towns and cities and biographical sketches of Ontario's notables, among them artists and writers. In content and appearance, the supplement was a welcome addition to the weekend newspaper.

These then, were the daily journals distributed in and around Toronto. The number and variety of them permitted

<sup>61</sup>Frank Luther Mott noted that in the United States the confusion between newspapers and magazines increased in the 1880s as metropolitan newspapers began to develop Sunday editions whose supplements "contained literary miscellany that was sometimes comparable with magazine content." The same is true of Toronto by the end of the decade. A History of American Magazines. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), IV, 2.

<sup>62</sup>Some of the 1893 engravings in the Mail included: G. A. Reid, The Lullaby (4 March); C. M. Manly, Sturgeon Fishing on the Niagara River (11 March); L. A. Muntz, The Fairy Tale (18 March); R. F. Gagen, In the Eastern Townships (25 March).

<sup>63</sup>Mail, 29 June 1895, supp.

Torontonians to choose the newspaper, or papers, best suited to their individual tastes.

In addition, there were some fifty periodicals of varying types. Mention, however, will be limited to cultural and social periodicals utilized in this study.

In 1880, Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review was the major cultural periodical emanating from Toronto.<sup>64</sup> This magazine was a continuation of The Canadian Monthly and National Review (1872-1878). The latter had a somewhat precarious existence and, in 1878, it amalgamated with Belford's Magazine.

After the merger, George Stewart (1848-1906), subsequently editor of the Quebec Chronicle, edited the magazine briefly. He was followed by Graeme Mercer Adam (1839-1912).<sup>65</sup> Adam, a Scot, had immigrated to Canada in 1858, and had long been associated with Canadian publishing. As an editor and critic for over 30 years, he played a conspicuous role in the Canadian literary scene. Adam had been closely connected with the Canadian Monthly in its early years. From July 1879 until the magazine ceased publication in June 1882, he was its sole editor.

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<sup>64</sup>Cited hereafter as Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly.

<sup>65</sup>Stewart was editor from April 1878 to April 1879. In July, 1879; Adam's name appears as editor.

Conflicting causes were cited for the magazine's demise. The publishers indicated that Canada's "inchoate state as a nation" was responsible for an absence of patriotism. Lacking this stimulus, the public looked beyond Canada for its reading material, and thus had not supported the magazine.<sup>66</sup>

Again, the Globe felt that the periodical's poor fortunes had resulted from poor editorial management and from a refusal to adapt the contents of the magazine to the actual literary tastes of Canadians.<sup>67</sup>

A somewhat different reason for the magazine's failure was mentioned by C. Pelham Mulvany in his contemporary volume, Toronto Past And Present. According to Mulvany, the publishers' policy of not paying its contributors and their lack of promotion was responsible for the magazine's miscarriage.<sup>68</sup> Doubtless, all the suggestions had an element of truth in them. Perhaps even more important was the size of the available market. In her recent study of the magazine, Marilyn Flitton has pointed out that the size of English-speaking readership in Canada was just not sufficient to sustain the kind of journalism the magazine afforded.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup>"Announcement," Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, 8 (June, 1882).

<sup>67</sup>"Notes and Comments," Globe, 3 July 1882.

<sup>68</sup>Mulvany, p. 210.

<sup>69</sup>Introduction, An Index to the Canadian Monthly and National Review 1872-1882 (Toronto: The Bibliographical Society of Canada, 1976), p. xxi.

Readers and writers with cultivated tastes were the market at which the Canadian Monthly had aimed when it was established in 1872. The editors promised that the magazine would be an organ for the "intellectual life of Canada."<sup>70</sup> Conceived as an independent journal to promote national interests, the Monthly had been patterned after such British periodicals as the Fortnightly Review and its contents included a wide range of material covering political, cultural, social and religious interests. Serialized novels, short fiction and poetry selections were essential literary items. In addition, there were special departments such as "Current Events," "Current Literature" and "Literary Notes."<sup>71</sup> Early contributors included a large number of academics and journalists with much of the British and American contingent being supplied by Goldwin Smith's connections.<sup>72</sup>

Smith's literary attitudes also established the tone of the magazine in its first few years. With his withdrawal from the scene in 1875, efforts were made to make the magazine more popular. This was attained partly by the inclusion of light fiction, and partly by increasing the number of contributors. It was only in the last three years of the magazine's existence, however, that

<sup>70</sup>"Introductory," Canadian Monthly, 1 (Jan. 1872).

<sup>71</sup>Flitton, pp. viii-x.

<sup>72</sup>Flitton, pp. xi-xii.

the material was contributed entirely by Canadian writers.<sup>73</sup> The changes did not seem to increase the circulation significantly and Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review suspended publication in June, 1882.

Approximately eighteen months elapsed before a new Toronto periodical was launched. This, of course, was The Week.<sup>74</sup> Its first number appeared in November, 1883. A weekly journal, the Week seems to have based its format on the prestigious American weekly, The Nation. The new periodical's name was probably suggested by a current topics column which headed each issue of The Nation entitled "The Week."<sup>75</sup> Expressing a hope that the journal's circulation would extend beyond the borders of Canada, the Week's prospectus noted that it expected to be judged by the standards of comparable British and American periodicals.<sup>76</sup>

The Week's first number outlined its future content, political stance, and anticipated readership. Suggesting that it would provide

<sup>73</sup> Flitton, pp. xvi-xix.

<sup>74</sup> Cited hereafter as Week.

<sup>75</sup> As Goldwin Smith contributed to The Nation from its earliest days, he would have been familiar with its format and may have suggested a similar format for the Week. Certainly, the Week's departments were similar to those carried by The Nation, namely: "Topics of the Week," Poetry, Literature, Fine Arts, Science and Finance. Only the latter seems generally absent from the Week.

<sup>76</sup> "Topics of the Week," Week, 13 Dec. 1883, p. 17.

a summary of the political, social and intellectual questions of the day, the Week described as a potential reader "the man of business, whose hours for reading are limited." Its contents were to appeal to the "different tastes which exist within the circle of a cultured home." As to its political stance, the journal announced: it would be thoroughly independent, "untrammelled by party considerations, free from party leanings, unbiased by party considerations." As a non-party journal, the Week promised it would promote Canadian nationality: "Its desire will be to further to the utmost of its power, the free and healthy development of the nation."<sup>77</sup>

The Week's politics have been cited as the reason for the hasty departure of its first editor, poet Charles G.D. Roberts. In her biography of Roberts, Elsie Pomeroy stated that Roberts resigned as editor of the Week after producing only 12 numbers because Goldwin Smith wished to use the columns of the Week to advocate Annexation.<sup>78</sup>

However, a glance at the Week's supporters over the years indicates such views would have been somewhat offset by a healthy dose of imperialism. Conversely, in the 1880s, Roberts referred

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<sup>77</sup>Week, 13 Dec. 1883, p. 17.

<sup>78</sup>Elsie Pomeroy, Sir Charles G.D. Roberts (Toronto: Ryerson, 1943), p. 50.

to himself as a "republican," and he also admitted that the task of editor was rather more demanding than he wished.<sup>79</sup> Thus, the political differences cited by Pomeroy must be put in their proper perspective. Perhaps the incident was recalled by Roberts in later years when he was a convinced imperialist and the details of his early radicalism had long been forgotten.

Subsequent editors were seldom identified. In addition to Roberts (Nov. 1883-Feb. 1884), editors included W. Phillip Robinson (1885), Carter Troop (Oct. 1894-May 1896) and C. Blackett Robinson (September 1896-November 1896). J. Castell Hopkins also mentioned J.H. Menzies, John G. Robinson, Mrs. J.W.F. Harrison, R.W. Arnot, and T.E. Moberly.<sup>80</sup> The two individuals most responsible for the existence of the Week, however, were C. Blackett Robinson and Goldwin Smith. In addition to the Week, Christopher Blackett Robinson (1837-1923) published such periodicals as the Canada Presbyterian, and The Canadian Law Journal. In the early years, Robinson and Goldwin Smith provided the financial backing for the Week, although Smith's direct

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<sup>79</sup> C.G.D. Roberts, letter to Lampman, 23 Sept. 1882. M.O. Hammond papers, "A," Baldwin Room, Toronto Public Library. Also C.G.D. Roberts, letter to B. Carman, 31 Dec. 1883 in Pomeroy, p. 51.

<sup>80</sup> J. Castell Hopkins, "A Review of Canadian Journalism," Canada: An Encyclopaedia of the Country (Toronto: Linscott, 1897), V, 234.



connection seems to have ceased early in the periodical's career.<sup>81</sup>

Throughout its thirteen-year career, the Week contained a variety of material. In addition to the topics of the day, travel and descriptive sketches were featured, such as G.M. Grant's series, "The Canadian Pacific Railway by the Kicking Horse Pass and the Selkirks." Biographical sketches were devoted to "Prominent Canadians." Papers from the Royal Society, reviews and critical comments, verse and fiction, and social and political news were also regular features of the periodical.

As Claude T. Bissell has shown, a history of literary taste can be traced by sampling the pages of the Week.<sup>82</sup> The Fine Arts were similarly represented, as exhibitions were reviewed and art notes were culled from various parts of the world. Occasionally other material appeared, such as the series of letters from the Rockies, recounting the experiences of the Canadian painter, T. Mower Martin.

The Week seems to have received a larger public reception than its predecessor, Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, had enjoyed, if we are to believe either the comments occasionally

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<sup>81</sup>Goldwin Smith, letter published in Mail denying any connection with the Week except for articles published under his own name. Mail, 16 Aug. 1887, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup>Bissell, pp. 237-51.

appearing in the newspapers or the hints of cautious optimism that subsequent prospectuses contained.<sup>83</sup> Nonetheless, it had financial problems. Subscriptions were offered at three dollars a year, and a single copy was listed at seven cents. This rate brought the paper within the range of the popular magazines.<sup>84</sup> Although compared to the daily newspapers, which ranged from one to three cents a copy, it was still more expensive. The paper also carried advertising, which helped to defray costs. In spite of this, however, the magazine lost some ten thousand dollars in its first three years of existence and continued to incur annual deficits.<sup>85</sup>

By 1890, this deficit must have reached alarming proportions, and plans seem to have been underway to refinance the publication. Goldwin Smith mentioned in the Bystander that he was glad to see that the Week was "likely to be restocked and sent forth on its course with renewed vigour."<sup>86</sup> C. Blackett Robinson seems to have proposed a subscription scheme, whereby individuals

<sup>83</sup>Notice, for example, Week, 4 Dec. 1884, p. 1; 3 Dec. 1885, p. 8; 30 Nov. 1894, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup>The Nation also sold for three dollars a year in 1884. Mott has noted that as long as the general magazine sold for thirty-five cents a copy, it was aimed at the moneyed and well-educated classes. However, when the price dropped to fifteen and ten cents, magazines "came down into the marketplace." Mott, 4, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup>C. Blackett Robinson, letter to G.M. Grant, 15 April. 1891. G.M. Grant Papers, Public Archives of Ontario.

<sup>86</sup>Bystander, New Series (Sept. 1890), 407.

throughout the Dominion would undertake to buy shares in the paper.<sup>87</sup>

In 1894, a statement appearing in the Week announced that it had been sold, the new proprietors being The Week Publishing Company of Toronto Limited.<sup>88</sup> These new proprietors were reported to be comprised of gentlemen representing both the great political parties of Canada. It was suggested that this situation would enable the Week to retain its political independence and would ensure that the paper contained a "thoroughly national" tone and aim. The statement concluded by reiterating the Week's objective of being "the best exponent of the best thought and life of the Canadian people."<sup>89</sup>

However, the change of management only enabled the periodical to survive another two years. The Week's demise was less maudlin than that of Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, with the final number giving no hint of its surcease. Roy Daniells has suggested that as the reading public became larger it seems to have become progressively less literary, a fact which would account for the Week's decline.<sup>90</sup> Nonetheless, the Week had

<sup>87</sup>Robinson to Grant, 15 April 1891.

<sup>88</sup>"More About Ourselves," Week, 30 Nov. 1894, p. 1.

<sup>89</sup>Week, 30 Nov. 1894, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup>Daniells, p. 218.

never enjoyed a very secure existence. In an article reviewing Canadian journalism prepared for Canada: An Encyclopaedia of the Country, J. Castell Hopkins mentioned that the Week had endured "fourteen years of struggle" and that it "died at last from want of popular support."<sup>91</sup> According to Hopkins, the Week expired at a time when "public opinion and development had reached the stage when such a journal might have been expected to meet with assured success." It also appears that most contributors were not paid for their submissions.<sup>92</sup>

Perhaps, another reason for the Week's decline was the ever-increasing competition for a limited readership, noticeable in the late 1880s as new periodicals with cultural pretensions entered the field. The most long-lived were the two Toronto periodicals, Saturday Night, established in 1887 as a weekly magazine; and The Canadian Magazine, established in 1893 as a monthly. Other Toronto periodical ventures, although short-lived, would have competed with the Week. These included Arcturus, a weekly which appeared during the first half of 1887; Lake Magazine, a monthly appearing between August 1892 and February 1893; and Massey's Magazine, a monthly published from 1896 to 1897. Outside of Toronto, a bi-monthly such as Montreal's Arcadia (May

<sup>91</sup>Hopkins, 5, 234.

<sup>92</sup>Robinson, letter to Grant, 15 April 1891.

1892 to March 1893) would have cut into the potential subscribers in that city. In addition, universities such as Queen's and Toronto were beginning to establish their own reviews.

Of these, The Canadian Magazine, established in 1893, probably provided the stiffest competition to the Week.<sup>93</sup> A monthly magazine with nationalist pretensions, its attractive book size format supplied with copious illustrations was immediately more alluring than the folio size, plain two-column page of the Week. The Canadian Magazine's prospectus emphasized that the periodical needed no apology for its appearance since the desirability of having a public forum for the discussion of questions of public interest by "leading thinkers and statesmen" had been the impetus behind the magazine's founding. It stated that the magazine's policy would include "cultivating Canadian patriotism and Canadian interests" and aiding in the "consolidation of the Dominion on a basis of national self-respect and a mutual regard for the rights of the great elements which made up the population of Canada."<sup>94</sup>

The Canadian Magazine presented itself as a very business-like operation. Published by The Ontario Publishing Company, it announced a Board of Directors which included such figures as the Honourable J. C. Patterson, "Minister of Militia," Honourable

<sup>93</sup> Cited hereafter as Canadian Magazine.

<sup>94</sup> "Announcement," Canadian Magazine, 1 (March, 1893).

Thomas Ballantyne, "Ex-Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario," and Thomas Wylie, "M.D., M.P.P." Its subscription rate was two dollars and fifty cents a year, in advance, and a single copy was advertised at twenty-five cents. In addition, it carried advertising.

Fiction, "chiefly in the form of short stories touching Canadian life," was promised by the Canadian Magazine, as well as other features of a "light and wholesome entertainment."<sup>95</sup> Basically, its contents were to reflect the Canadian scene. In an 1899 article describing the purpose of a national magazine, J. Gordon Mowat, founder and first editor of the magazine, and a former journalist with the Globe, emphasized the need to reflect the country's development. "A national magazine, while taking in the large questions that engage attention everywhere, should give special attention to the broad political, social and industrial questions of the country, its history, art, literature. . . ."<sup>96</sup>

Roy Daniells has suggested that the Canadian's formula for success was mediocrity.<sup>97</sup> Certainly, it is true that the Canadian had features of popular journalism conspicuously absent

<sup>95</sup>Canadian Magazine, 1 (March, 1893).

<sup>96</sup>J. Gordon Mowat, "The Purpose of a National Magazine, Canadian Magazine, 12 (Feb. 1899), iv.

<sup>97</sup>Daniells, p. 218.

in its predecessors. However, another factor contributing to its success may have been its distinctly Canadian tone. Unlike Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and the Week, the centre of consciousness was always Canada.<sup>98</sup> As J. Castell Hopkins noted in 1899, the Canadian Magazine's "prosperity" revealed what could be done by a magazine "which aims at a national character."<sup>99</sup> Whatever its formula, the Canadian Magazine succeeded in lasting well into the twentieth century.

Another competitor to the Week was Saturday Night, established in 1887. Edited by E.E. Sheppard, Saturday Night was an illustrated weekly containing independent political commentary, criticism of the performing arts, social news, and light fiction, and literary and art criticism. Designed as a family weekly, Saturday Night promised that its contents would not "fail to amuse and instruct."<sup>100</sup> While denying that it was in any way a political paper, the prospectus noted that the paper "will have its remarks to make about politics and politicians" in a tone which it described as breezy and thoughtful. It seems that a ready audience awaited.

<sup>98</sup> While Daniells argued for the Canadian nature of the Canadian Monthly, he defined it as a "high colonial culture...." Daniells, p. 209. Bissell emphasized the cosmopolitan nature of the Week and noted that provincial and local matters comprised only a fraction of its space. Bissell, p. 242.

<sup>99</sup> Hopkins, 5, 234.

<sup>100</sup> "Salutary," Saturday Night, 3 Dec. 1887, p. 6.

this new periodical, for the first week's edition advertised as exceeding ten thousand copies was reported to have been sold out within two hours of "hitting the streets."<sup>101</sup>

One other magazine is of interest because of its topical comments on various questions of the day. Grip magazine, essentially a cartoon weekly aimed at lampooning Canadian politicians, was established in 1873 under the editorship of J.W. Bengough, a cartoonist and poet. Its publishing life was also somewhat precarious, although it managed to survive until 1894. The magazine's motto explained its philosophy: "The gravest beast is the Ass; The gravest bird is the Owl; The gravest fish is the Oyster; The gravest man is the Fool."<sup>102</sup> As an Independent Journal of Humour and Caricature, Grip often satirized cultural achievements and cultural pretensions, thus helping to keep the lofty aspirations of Torontonians in perspective.

Any review of newspapers and periodicals would be incomplete without some comment on circulation. Certainly, it would seem that the reading audience of the periodicals was a limited one, although actual statistics are lacking. C. Blackett Robinson, for instance, mentioned in 1891 that the addition of a "few hundred

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<sup>101</sup>"Success of Saturday Night," Saturday Night, 10 Dec. 1887, p. 6.

<sup>102</sup>Grip, 5 Nov. 1892, p. 292.



names" to the subscription list would ensure a "modest dividend" on all the capital required.<sup>103</sup> In comparison, however, the British Fortnightly Review had a subscription list of 2,500 in 1872.<sup>104</sup> In 1913, the University Magazine sponsored by Dalhousie, McGill and Toronto Universities would only obtain 3,300 after an all time high of 5,300 achieved the previous year. One would assume that the Week's circulation did not exceed these periodicals and that, in fact, its actual circulation was a "few hundred." As to the audience of the newspapers, one can only hazard a guess. While the newspapers did publish circulation figures, their accuracy is questionable in an era when such figures were often padded for purposes of soliciting advertisements. Even newspaper editors of the period could be duped as J.E. Atkinson realized, when he assumed control of the near-bankrupt Toronto Star in 1899, and found the paper's circulation was half of what he had been led to believe it was.<sup>106</sup>

The practice was not limited to Canada. Commenting on the circulation figures of American magazines of the period, Frank

<sup>103</sup> Robinson, letter to Grant dated 15 April 1891.

<sup>104</sup> Flitton, p. xvi.

<sup>105</sup> S.E.D. Shortt, "Andrew McPhail," The Search for an Ideal (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 17.

<sup>106</sup> Harkness, p. 41.

Luther Mott notes: "... there was something sacrosanct about circulation figures. The fact is that there was so much dishonesty in the statements before the days of circulation auditing that even honest publishers were supersensitive in the matter."<sup>107</sup> Thus, circulation figures have only a relative significance in indicating the respective circulation positions of the various newspapers, but one can assume that the one, two and three cent newspaper reached a far higher proportion of the population than did the higher priced periodicals.<sup>108</sup>

The greatest difference between the newspapers and the periodicals, however, was in the perception of their individual roles. The daily press believed it had a function to fulfil in disseminating material to a large segment of the literate public, not just to cultivate the tastes of the elite as did periodicals like Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and the Week. A writer in the Women's Globe (a special number produced entirely by women) fervently described this function in "The Mission of the Press":

Not by the favoured few alone  
Are God's inspired singers heard  
The Press repeats the flowing strain  
Until the world's great heart is stirred.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>107</sup>Mott, 3, 6.

<sup>108</sup>Sample circulations reported by various papers include:  
Globe: 1880: 23,808; 1885: 30,666; 1896: 148,000.  
News: 1894: 25,516.  
Telegram: 1879: 7,814; 1885: 17,189; 1891: 20,857.  
The Mail was usually content to advertise that it had the highest circulation.

<sup>109</sup>Jeanette Rodgers Somerville, Globe, 18 April 1895, p. 13.

Daily newspapers provided a wealth of information to the Toronto public as they reviewed the ever-changing spectrum of late Victorian life in Canada and elsewhere. In the cultural field, dailies introduced readers to the various figures who were publishing and painting. They harangued the public on their duty to patronize Canadian culture and promoted the arts themselves. By means of reviews, the newspapers described the various works of literature and painting being produced in the 1880s and 1890s, and occasionally proffered serious critical judgments. In the final analysis, the newspapers may provide a more accurate reflection of the state of the arts in Canada than do the periodicals. The newspapers reached a far greater percentage of the population and, in turn, reflected public opinion of a broader segment of the population than would have been possible in the narrower class range of the elitist periodicals. And it is to the comments of the newspapers on cultural matters that we will now turn.

## CHAPTER II

### "PROMOTION, DEMOTION, AND COMMOTION: CULTURE, PATRONAGE AND SOCIETY"

Who killed John Keats?  
"I," says the Quarterly,  
So savage and Tartarly;  
" 'Twás one of my feats."

Lord Byron

The relationship between the creative artist and society is a many-faceted one involving both the creator and his creation. Leaving aside an actual examination of the work itself, this relationship can be explored in a number of ways. It can be examined in the reception the artist's work (literary or visual) receives at the hands of the public. Alternatively, it can be surveyed in an examination of the manner in which the writer or painter promotes himself or is promoted or assisted by the community around him. Again, an inquiry into the way in which the artist relates to others in the creative milieu itself could be pursued. In later chapters of this study, the public attitude to various works of literature and painting will be probed through newspaper reviews. This chapter will concentrate on the broad arena of inter-personal relationships. It discusses areas of patronage or cultural promotion, as it describes those who furthered creative artists, and areas of cultural

dissension as it surveys those who hindered them. Finally, it also looks at the manner in which creative artists were promoted or demoted.

Some years ago, Donald Creighton succinctly distinguished the forces which were making for dissolution as against those which were tending to unification in the Canada of the 1880s and 1890s. According to Creighton, cultural movements were the forces exerting a unifying influence upon the country in the face of economic, sectional and political problems:

If the material influences of the period were making for weakness and division, the cultural and spiritual forces of the time were exerting some influence on the side of unity and strength. The scholars who founded the Royal Society, the clergymen who established the national churches, the poets who painted the national scene and evoked the national history, were all strengthening and enriching the loose, coarse fabric of Canadian life. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Certainly there can be no doubt that those engaged in the cultural arena had a sense that they were contributing to the development of a national identity. Painters, poets and writers were making Canadians better acquainted with the rich resources and the diversity of this new political entity: Canada.

However, the motivation behind this national spirit was not altogether altruistic or idealistic. Charles G.D. Roberts wrote to

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Creighton, Dominion of the North, rev. ed. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1957), p. 371.

Archibald Lampman in 1882:

We may by strenuous effort soon succeed in spreading the literary and national spirit of Canada so as to make literature an entirely self-supporting profession for us. This should be one of our aims, and speed the day that sees it accomplished.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, nationalism was a "bread and butter" issue for some poets. It should also be emphasized that the group of scholars and creative people in English-speaking Canada was not large in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, while they may have been "strengthening Canadian life," they were never unified in either their approach to, or their ideal of, what that national unity should be. Further, petty rivalries and dissensions often marked their dealings with one another. At the same time, then as now, friends promoted friends in both the cultural field and other areas of patronage and life. The newspapers were a public forum for airing the various quarrels and jealousies, as well as a method of "booming" various cultural productions. Journals both recorded examples of patronage and actively became a means of promotion for various patronage causes. Indeed, the newspapers make it very clear that the Canadian cultural scene was no more unified than any other aspect of Canadian society.

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<sup>2</sup>Charles G.D. Roberts, letter to A. Lampman, 23 Sept. 1882.

Periodical literature of the late nineteenth century expressed a recurrent lament that the arts were not supported by Canadian society. And it is true that literary and visual artists had difficulty in supporting themselves from their creative work, as will be seen. That is not to say, however, that the authors and painters were forced solely to rely upon their own efforts, or that they did not receive patronage from various segments of society, both public and private. The most obvious example of public promotion was the creation of the Royal Canadian Academy and the Royal Society.

Both organizations owed their existence to the exertions of the Marquis of Lorne. Sir John Douglas Sutherland, the Marquis of Lorne, and later the ninth Duke of Argyll (1845-1914), was Governor-General of Canada from 1878 to 1883. A poet, he was the friend of such well-known British painters as Sir Edwin Landseer and Sir John Everett Millais. He was also the husband of Princess Louise, the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria. As Governor-General, Lorne's constitutional position prevented him from taking a too-active role in Canadian politics. Further, as his poetry revealed, his own interests were in the cultural sphere. His inclinations were shared by his wife, who was an amateur painter. As a result, Lorne utilized his position as Governor-General to establish Canadian cultural institutions.

The Royal Canadian Academy of Arts and the Royal Society of Canada were intended to foster the development of a national art, science and literature. (Permission for the term "royal" was achieved through Lorne's intervention with his mother-in-law, Queen Victoria.) While Lorne envisaged these institutions as disinterested centres around which the intellectual and cultural life of the Dominion would rally, he reckoned without taking human nature and the pragmatic spirit of the age into account. As we shall see, the usefulness of these organizations became inversely equated with their immediate function in improving the prospects of their members. Interestingly, while opposition to the formation of the two associations arose from a question of their place and function in a new country like Canada, at the same time resistance to the establishment of both associations arose in part from the prospective members themselves.

Much of this opposition arose from the fact that both the Academy and the Society would have a limited membership. Although Lorne sought to avoid dissension by making the first appointments himself, this was not entirely satisfactory to either the painters or the potential fellows.

While Lorne described his role in the formation of the art Academy in the metaphor of a "snowplow" charging forward into the "icecrusts" of opposition, he privately admitted that the under-



taking had not been without problems.<sup>3</sup> In an oft-quoted letter, Lorne graphically portrayed the dissension in the artistic ranks, with half the artists ready "to choke the other half with their paint brushes."<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the Ontario Society of Artists, the group which had originally promoted Lorne's scheme, found some of its members lukewarm and even hostile when they realized they would not all automatically be members of the new academy.<sup>5</sup> In the final list of nominees, the largest proportion came from the Ontario Society of Artists, a fact which seems to indicate that there was a great deal of political manoeuvring before the list was settled.<sup>6</sup>

Far removed from the scene of debate, Daniel Fowler (1810-1894), a well-known painter living on Amherst Island near Kingston, Ontario, summed up the ambivalent attitude to the Academy and its

<sup>3</sup>"The Academy of Art," Globe, 8 March 1880, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Marquis of Lorne, letter to Hicks-Beach, quoted in W. Stewart MacNutt, Days of Lorne (Fredericton, N.B.: Brunswick Press, 1955), pp. 137-38.

<sup>5</sup>The Minute Books of the Ontario Society of Artists indicate that an attempt was made to block the establishment of the Academy by a motion to rescind the original motion of Sept. 1879 supporting its formation. Significantly, the motion followed a discussion on proposed membership for the Academy. Minute Books, Sept. and Oct. 1879, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>6</sup>Dennis Reid points out that in addition to the original list of nominees from the Ontario Society of Artists, another five Toronto painters appeared. Legend has it that T. Mower Martin, in particular, was omitted from the original list because of jealousy. Our Own Country Canada (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1979), pp. 284-86.

first members. One of the original nominees to the new Academy, Fowler mentioned the selection in a letter to his Toronto Art Dealer, James Spooner. To Spooner, Fowler wrote as follows:

I received a [...] letter from O'Brien informing me that I had been appointed an Academician. . . . Of course I accepted, tho I cannot [say] I find the honour overwhelming. In the list you send I find . . . names unknown to me, and miss others which I should have expected to find.<sup>7</sup>

On the whole, however, Toronto artists and the press seem to have supported the idea of an Academy in principle. While there were reservations that the organization might be precipitous, or at least hurt Toronto as an art centre, and there were murmurings about the original nominations for membership, there was little active opposition to the actual establishment of the Academy. This was in marked contrast to the furore that surrounded the inception of the Royal Society.

Originally, it seems to have been Lorne's intention to found a literary association based on the French model. Opposition to this idea arose from questions such as the role the Society would play in Canada, the function it would serve in promoting literature, and the actual membership it would comprise. On the whole, the scheme was opposed by such Toronto newspapers as the Globe, the

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<sup>7</sup>Bracketed words illegible. Daniel Fowler, letter to James Spooner, 19 Jan. 1880. Spooner Correspondence, Colgate Papers, Archives of Ontario.

Telegram, and the World. Even the literary periodical, Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, was vociferous in denouncing Lorne's idea.<sup>8</sup> From the moment that Lorne first mentioned his proposed society, the newspapers discussed the idea vigorously. When rumours of Lorne's intentions first reached the Globe, the paper announced its incredulity and indicated that there must be little reliability in such reports. In an editorial, entitled "Literature and the Proposed Academy," they suggested that it would be ungracious to hold Lorne responsible for a project which appeared "somewhat absurd."<sup>9</sup>

The Globe's objections to a literary academy were twofold: function and membership. If the function of a literary academy were to encourage the development of Canadian literature, the Globe argued that the major incentive needed was to increase the monetary

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<sup>8</sup>MacNutt mentioned that the Globe was the sole continuing opponent to the Royal Society and that their vitriolic stand caused other journals to come round to support Lorne's idea. See: Days of Lorne, p. 139. In Toronto, at least this was not so. Only the Mail seems to have remained comparatively silent on the subject. In particular, the Telegram noted: "The Marquis of Lorne is anxious to go on with his scheme of establishing an institution in Canada similar to the French academy. He does not seem to be getting much encouragement for the project from Ontario. Nobody says anything about it. He is getting encouragement from the sister province. But the institution is French in character, and the French . . . naturally hold up their hands for it on that ground." Telegram, 1 June 1881.

<sup>9</sup>"Literature and the Proposed Academy," Editorial, Globe, 11 June 1881, p. 8.

rewards of the literary calling, and it stated, ironically as it turned out, "no one supposes that the proposed academy would have funds to distribute." As to membership, the editorial pointed out that Canada had few literary men, and to form any academy, "you must first catch your academicians." It argued that to include "mere poet-tasters or mawkish writers of alleged Fiction or History would make the academy a laughing stock from the beginning."<sup>10</sup>

In summary, rather than benefiting the development of Canadian literature, the Globe felt that the establishment of a society for literature would be a distinct hindrance. In a tone heavy with sarcasm, the editorial concluded: "A mutual admiration society of nincompoops could not benefit Canadian literature, but on the contrary would certainly make the profession look ridiculous."<sup>11</sup>

The Telegram also condemned the formation of a literary academy. Stating that the country already had too many titles and "artificial distinctions," the Telegram suggested: "Bye and bye everybody you meet will have some sort of title penned on to the front of his name or pegged on behind." Noting that membership

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<sup>10</sup>Globe, 11 June 1881, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>Globe, 11 June 1881, p. 8. The Telegram criticised the Globe for its rudeness, but maintained its opposition to the society. See: "Canadian Literature," Telegram, 13 June 1881.

in a Canadian academy would neither add brilliancy to a writer's "pen" nor enhance his public image, the Telegram cautioned against carrying the "forcing process ..." in art or literature too far, since "hot house plants" were never as strong as plants which grow in the open air. <sup>12</sup>

But Lorne was not to be deterred. In opening the second exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy at Halifax, Lorne apparently alluded to the arguments against an academy of letters, describing the opposition as stemming from undue modesty on the part of Canadians. "Not Modesty But Pride" a lead editorial in the Globe responded. The Globe insisted that opposition to the proposal resulted from a type of "pride" that refused flattery for non-existent qualities. And since Canada did not possess a great literature, it was false to set up an association which would belie the fact. As free traders, the Globe did not believe that inferior literature should be foisted on the public simply on the grounds of "home production." It commented: "No one persists in eating suckers caught in the neighbourhood when he can get salmon from a distance at less money." According to the Globe, the true patriot would hope for the rise of native literary genius, but that his pride would prevent him from artificially creating the institutions for such

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<sup>12</sup>"Canadian Academy," Editorial, Telegram, 1 June 1881.

a group before it existed:

As a patriot, he hopes that native writers of genius may arise—, but he has too much pride in his country to wish that an institution should be established calculated to make the world suppose he and other Canadians cannot distinguish between good literature and its travesties. The opposition to the Academy is founded on the patriotic wish that nothing ridiculous should be set up in the name of the country. Modesty is sometimes a point of pride for Nations as well as individuals.<sup>13</sup>

Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly also opposed the formation of a literary academy. While they felt such an academy could have a laudable function in directing "public culture and national advancement," they questioned the practical operation of such an organization. The editorial pointed out that the public had no means of critical judgement for the productions of this group, and thus would be forced to rely on the judgements of a "coterie of native professionals" who comprised the group.<sup>14</sup>

With the announcement that the Royal Society would be established as an organization embracing both science and letters, much of the opposition was toned down. Nonetheless, Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly still commented that, while they supported

<sup>13</sup>"Not Modesty But Pride," Editorial, Globe, 7 July 1881, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>"The Proposed Canadian Academy of Letters," Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, 7 (July, 1881), 99-100.

the idea of a science association, they continued to have reservations about the aspect of letters: "We think it a matter of regret that the intended Canadian counterpart of the Royal Society of England did not imitate its English model and modestly refrain from taking literature under its patronage."<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to its earlier opposition, the Globe accepted the idea of the Royal Society while at the same time indicating that there was meagre material for such an association in this "raw and democratic land." It also suggested that Lorne should appoint the members himself, although it felt the shortness of time for selection did not augur well for success. It trusted, however, that the first meeting would be sufficiently successful to silence further criticism of the Society.<sup>16</sup>

Indeed, the reservations expressed by the Globe were prophetic and the appointment of the first members created waves throughout the literary circles. Privately, W.H. Withrow, the editor of the Canadian Methodist Magazine, noted:

I don't think an academy would work. . . .  
Every political hack would want to be in  
it. . . . I fear an academy would foster  
jealousy unless the immortals were  
selected by vote of all the writers and

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<sup>15</sup>"The Royal Society of Canada," Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, 8 (May, 1882), 545-49.

<sup>16</sup>"The 'Royal Society of Canada,'" Editorial, Globe, 25 Feb. 1882, p. 8.

artists in the country.... Without this mode of voting... I don't see how you can select the best writers or artists anymore than the best lawyers or doctors.<sup>17</sup>

Publicly, Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly queried the grounds for selection of members since it noted the absence of many names of note from the English Literature section, in particular those of W.D. LeSueur (Ottawa), J.L. Rattray (Toronto), V.C. Dent (Toronto), and N.F. Davin (a former resident of Toronto).<sup>18</sup> A letter to the World also noted the exclusion of the above names, as well as that of Philips Thompson, and noted that the "studied exclusion of journalists" from the Society's ranks reduced it to a "mutual admiration society in the interests of a few favoured educational institutions and a few favoured families."<sup>19</sup>

In fact, of the twenty individuals who comprised the charter list of the English literature section, three were journalists, although none was from Ontario. The distribution of other professions included seven civil servants, seven professors, one physician, one priest and one gentleman—Goldwin Smith. Fourteen of the

<sup>17</sup>W.H. Withrow, letter to William Kirby, 11 Jan. 1882. Withrow's ideas changed dramatically after his own election. It was then an "honour" to be associated with such illustrious people. Withrow, letter to Kirby, 28 June 1884, Correspondence With Publishers, William Kirby Papers, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>18</sup>"The Royal Society of Canada," Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, 8 (May, 1884), 548-49.

<sup>19</sup>"Lord Lorne's Academy," World, 5 May 1882.



members resided in Ontario, with five being residents of Toronto. Most of the fellows' publications were in the realm of factual knowledge, either in history or philosophy, although belles-lettres were also represented by six members. Of these, four were poets, one a fiction writer, and one, a combination of both (William Kirby). Again, three of these were from Ontario, although none was a Torontonians. At the time of their election, only George Murray, a classical master at Montreal High School who became literary editor of the Montreal Star and John George Bourinot (1837-1902), clerk of the House of Commons, had not published book-length studies, although Bourinot's essay, "The Intellectual Development of the Canadian People" appeared in pamphlet form.<sup>20</sup> It was around Bourinot, however, that much of the criticism of the Royal Society centred.

Nicholas Flood Davin (1843-1901), a former journalist with both the Globe and the Mail and future spokesman for West Assiniboia in the House of Commons, had some cause to feel slighted. In sheer bulk, his major publication prior to 1882, The Irish in Canada (1877, 692 pages) was more than five times as long as Bourinot's essay. Davin chose to vent his feeling in a pamphlet entitled: "The Secretary of the Royal Society of Canada, A Literary

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<sup>20</sup>Information based on biographical searches of the twenty charter members listed in Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, 1 (1882), iv.

Fraud." The pamphlet contained an open letter to the Marquis of Lorne which queried the grounds for Bourinot's appointment to the position of secretary of the Society. Using illustrations from Bourinot's own work, Davin argued that the many inaccuracies, grammatical errors and stylistic blunders that Bourinot's writing exhibited made him a poor example of the calibre of person elected to the august new society.<sup>21</sup>

Davin's pamphlet was circulated by another literary outsider, Henry J. Morgan (1842-1913). Morgan, a civil servant and a founder of the Canada First Movement, had along with several other notable works produced Bibliotheca Canadensis (1867), the first manual of Canadian literature. He was also responsible for the prestigious Dominion Annual Register And Review (1878-1886), and he too had not been appointed to the Royal Society. Somewhat discomfited, Bourinot emphasized in private letters that he had not kept anyone out of the Society.<sup>22</sup> It is legitimate to question the criteria that distinguished Bourinot as a charter member and excluded such men as Davin and Morgan. Interestingly, Davin was never elected to the Royal Society and Morgan was elected only in 1904. Perhaps it is a coincidence, but Bourinot died about

<sup>21</sup>The Secretary of The Royal Society of Canada A Literary Fraud (Ottawa, 1882).

<sup>22</sup>J. G. Bourinot, letter to William Kirby, 7 Oct. 1882. Correspondence A22, William Kirby Papers, Archives of Ontario.

eighteen months before Morgan's election.

Davin was not alone in his disparaging remarks. J.E. Collins (1855-1892), a Toronto journalist, took up the cudgels in his volume, Canada Under The Administration of Lord Lorne. Published in 1883, the book reviewed the accomplishments of the Marquis of Lorne during his term as Governor-General of Canada. While Collins applauded Lorne's efforts to establish an art academy, the author regretted Lorne's exertions on behalf of the Royal Society.

Describing the formation of the Royal Society, Collins focused on the response to the initial announcement of its institution, and on the process of member selection. According to Collins, two groups of people eagerly anticipated the inception of the Society: those who had actually published works, but of whose value only the authors were certain; and those who had authored works, but had never managed to get them published. Collins continued that unfortunately the list of people comprising these two groups was too large and the "heart" of a large portion of the cultural community was broken when the roll of those "rendered immortal" was published.<sup>23</sup>

As to the selection process for the Society's membership, Collins likened it to a "lottery," in which the first names pulled

<sup>23</sup>Canada Under the Administration of Lord Lorne (Toronto: Rose, 1884), p. 368.

out of the bag were elected.<sup>24</sup> In emulation of Davin's pamphlet, Collins devoted several pages to the publications of the Secretary of the Royal Society, whose work was described as of "such extraordinary style as to attract attention as does some sudden exhibition of physical phenomena."<sup>25</sup>

Collins concluded his remarks on the Society with the comment that if the selection process indicated it was not a mark of depreciation to be excluded from the society, at the same time, "it was no evidence of culture to be taken in to it."<sup>26</sup>

Lorne had intended that his greatest effort at patronage would be an organization which would not be impeded by "small jealousies" or the "carping spirit of detraction."<sup>27</sup> He had hoped that Canadians would recognize the Society's members as a centre round which to rally. While some sections of the Society may have fulfilled Lorne's expectations, in the 1880s and 1890s, the section devoted to English Literature remained a source of dissension, an embarrassment, and a target for journalistic criticism. This was perhaps due to the fact that as a means for promoting literary

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<sup>24</sup> Collins, p. 369.

<sup>25</sup> Collins, pp. 363-65.

<sup>26</sup> Collins, p. 369.

<sup>27</sup> Opening Address, The Royal Society of Canada, Proceedings For 1882, p. v.

enterprise, the Royal Society had not been effective. Certainly, it did not further Toronto's aspirations as a cultural centre.

In 1886, a Globe editorial pronounced its final judgement on Lorne's efforts in founding the Society. Describing Lorne as an "amiable creature" with a penchant for doing good, one who would have done well as "President of Coal and Flannel Distribution," the Globe noted that unfortunately fate had thrown him "into a position to make his fads conspicuous and to induce other men to take part in them." Hence, the Globe intoned: "Canada has a Royal Society, and the Royal Society has an English Literature section, and Canadians of literary feeling have a laughing stock, and the world has reason to infer that the very idea of literature is unknown to the English Provinces of this Dominion."<sup>28</sup>

From their inception, the Royal Society and the Royal Canadian Academy had differing aims and perceptions which not only distinguished them, but resulted in different attitudes regarding their future public support. The Royal Society was a very select group. Each of the four sections had twenty members, for a total of eighty fellows. Thus, the section devoted to English Literature, or, more properly, Liberal Arts, as it would be termed today, comprised a very small fraction of those engaged in various aspects of the field. In contrast, the Academy was composed of forty

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<sup>28</sup>"The Royal Society," Editorial, Globe, 28 May 1886, p. 4.

members, plus a minimum of twenty associate members, plus non-resident Academicians and Honorary Retired Academicians. In addition, there was a class for Honorary Members composed of financial patrons.

The Royal Society<sup>29</sup> was much more elitist than the Academy. As Bourinot put it in his 1891 presidential address, the Society was intended to counter the "levelling principle . . . that any man should be in any way better than another."<sup>29</sup> Conversely, the members of the Academy were to be of "fair-moral character" and artists "by profession," while Honorary Members were to be composed of "men who take an interest in Art and in the industrial progress of the country."<sup>30</sup> Thus, the Academy (as indeed did its parent body, the Ontario Society of Artists) reached for support outside of its constituency.

Honorary patrons both endorsed the Academy and the Ontario Society of Arts with financial support and gave them a haut monde aspect which made the annual exhibitions a social event. Although it had aspects of colonialism, these exhibitions gave evidence that Canada and, for our purpose, Toronto, had a cultural scene. Thus, the newspapers described the exhibition openings at length although

<sup>29</sup>J. G. Bourinot, "Our Intellectual Strength And Weakness," p. 35.

<sup>30</sup>Constitution and Laws of the Royal Canadian Academy (Toronto: Bingham and Webber, 1891), p. 4.

as the Mail wistfully commented: "... we could wish that the attendance would be as large on account of its interest in art as on account of interest in royalty."<sup>31</sup>

That the haut monde aspect was crucial to the success of exhibitions is demonstrated both by satires in Grip and by the actual minutes of the Ontario Society of Artists. In one of Grip's jokes "Sherwood Pinxit" attempts to persuade "Mr. Nouveaurich" to buy tickets to an exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists. "Mr. Nouveaurich" refuses to be persuaded until he hears that the affair is under the patronage of the Lieutenant-Governor: "Give us five reserved seat tickets, quick," gasped Nouveaurich: "why didn't you mention that at first?"<sup>32</sup> A resolution passed by the Ontario Society of Artists in 1894 also confirms that official patronage counted for a great deal in terms of attendance. Originally, it had been planned to charge an admission fee of one dollar for the opening of the exhibition; however, when it was learned that the Governor-General would not be present, the motion was rescinded and it was decided that there would be free admission to the exhibition!<sup>33</sup>

Glittering receptions were a part of the exhibitions, especially in the eighties when the Academy was still somewhat of a novelty.

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<sup>31</sup>"The Academy of Arts," Editorial, Mail, 21 May 1883, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup>"Patronage," Grip, 15 Nov. 1890, p. 308.

<sup>33</sup>Minutes, Ontario Society of Artists, 10 April 1894, Archives of Ontario.

Vice-Regal personages not only presided at these receptions, but they led the way in a more practical form of patronage in their financial support for the artists. At the first exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy, Lorne spent some nine hundred dollars on paintings by Homer Watson, William Raphael, Allan Edson, W. A. Fraser and Lucius O'Brien. The Globe noted that the Governor-General and Princess Louise

... have for themselves and their friends on the other side of the Atlantic made liberal purchase of the works of Canadian artists, and certainly men of merit who are struggling with the disadvantages necessarily attending a profession like theirs in a new country could not meet with a better stroke of fortune than to have some of their choicest works introduced to the art connoisseurs of Great Britain under such distinguished and ably discriminating patronage.<sup>34</sup>

Lorne also headed the list of Honorary Patrons, with a five-hundred dollar donation to the Academy.<sup>35</sup>

When public officials failed to play their roles as patrons of art, protests were vociferous. An amusing example of such failure occurred at the 1889 opening of the Ontario Society of Artists exhibition. The Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario was invited to open the exhibition, and he carried out his duties with a seeming dis-

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<sup>34</sup>"The Academy of Art," Globe, 8 March 1880, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup>List of Honorary Members, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, 1880.



regard of protocol.

Sir Alexander Campbell (1822-1892), Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario from 1887 until his death, and formerly Postmaster General in the federal cabinet of John A. Macdonald, was perhaps more at home in the political arena than in the role of exhibition-opener. At any rate, he certainly opened the 1889 art exhibition with a lack of finesse. He arrived a few minutes before the appointed hour of eleven a.m., opened the exhibition with a few brusque words, and then immediately departed, without so much as taking a glance at the display of paintings. Reporting the incident, the Globe noted that the Lieutenant-Governor's early arrival had "disappointed" a couple of score of persons" who had arrived after the fact.<sup>36</sup>

The whole scene had a hint of dramatic irony about it as Campbell's remarks followed those of the honorary president of the Ontario Society of Artists, Honourable G.W. Allan. Allan spoke of the great progress made by the artists and of the great role played by the Society in stimulating art education throughout the province.<sup>37</sup> Conversely, Campbell was reported as having commented that he knew nothing about art and was at a loss to know what had induced the artists to invite him except that it might have

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<sup>36</sup>"Ontario Society of Artists," Globe, 23 May 1889, p. 8.

<sup>37</sup>Globe, 23 May 1889, p. 8.

been to attract a large crowd to the opening. Following hard upon such rudeness, Campbell added that Canada was too young and too poor to encourage art, even though the Marquis of Lorne had advocated its cultivation. Campbell concluded that the artists should turn their talents to more profitable employment.<sup>38</sup>

In an accompanying editorial, the Globe noted that if Campbell could not carry out his role appropriately, then he should have declined the artists' invitation. However, the paper pointed out that the incident was not without its good effects if it helped to bring to an end the practice of having figure-heads, rather than the principal officer of an organisation, open exhibitions.<sup>39</sup>

Campbell's display became an occasion for comment on the status of the arts in Canada. Saturday Night referred to the incident, pointing to the fallacy in Campbell's remarks:

Because Canada does not yet appreciate the Old Masters, or pay liberal prices for the work of its artistic sons, it certainly is no reason why every artist should become a house painter, or leave his easel to paint patent medicine advertisements on country fences. . . . Because we have a small market and Canadian literature has a somewhat limited sale, does it follow that those who aspire to

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<sup>38</sup> Globe, 23 May 1889, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> "Sir Alexander and the Art Exhibition," Editorial, Globe, 23 May 1889, p. 4.

literary distinction should become book-keepers or address-writers of envelopes and wrappers?<sup>40</sup>

The Week's art critic also commented on the Lieutenant-Governor's performance, but tended to agree with his suggestion that public taste was defective.<sup>41</sup> In another article entitled "The Repression of Art Culture" (in that same number of the Week), Graeme Mercer Adam commented on the Lieutenant-Governor's performance. The article opened in a highly rhetorical fashion, pointing to the "wound" Campbell had inflicted not only to the artists, but to the "twin handmaids" of Literature and Art:

If the one receives a hurt, the other is no less deeply wounded. The common sympathy, born of the common aims and aspirations of the two sister arts, draws them closely together. The bond is a natural one, for they are both occupied in the patriotic work of redeeming the country from the thorns and briars of a literary and artistic wilderness, and of nursing into flower the tender but thriving plant of Canadian nationality. While engaged in the joint and laudable work, it is not unnatural to find that a rebuff to the one is felt to be a rebuff to the other.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>"Around Town," Saturday Night, 25 May 1889, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup>"The Parent Art Society of Ontario," Week, 31 May 1889, pp. 408-09.

<sup>42</sup>"The Repression of Art Culture," Week, 31 May 1889, p. 405.

The worst part of Campbell's remarks, according to Adam, was that they would be taken by not a few "as a repression of the higher ideal in intellectual pursuits and an encouragement to the mischievous elevation of the prosaic and the practical."<sup>43</sup>

Campbell's remarks also precipitated a number of letters to the various journals. A letter signed "A Citizen Not An Artist" in the Empire suggested that Campbell's remarks presented "a standing reproach to the intelligence of this city."<sup>44</sup> According to the writer it was the duty of such public figures to present an enlightened example to others. A correspondent to the Globe wrote even more forcibly of Campbell's actions, the letter being captioned with the biblical analogy, "They Asked For Bread And He Gave Them A Stone." The correspondent, "Purblind," suggested that either the artists had paid Sir Campbell too high a compliment or else he was right in suggesting that the artists ought to be engaged in more useful pursuits. As such he could be called a "reformer" and ought to be treated as "one of the luminaries of the world." Continuing tongue in cheek, Purblind referred to the many patrons who must be wrong if Campbell were correct:

Sir Alexander, in his wisdom, reproves  
Lord Dufferin and the Marquis of Lorne;

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<sup>43</sup>Week, 31 May 1889, p. 405.

<sup>44</sup>"The Lieutenant-Governor At the Exhibition," Letter, Empire, 23 May 1889.

the Princess Louise he probably makes allowance for—as a weak woman knowing no better. His rebuke applies to Lord Lansdowne, and Lord Stanley of Preston, who, since his arrival in the Dominion, has conspicuously advocated a native art culture. . . .<sup>45</sup>

In a long letter to the Week, the artist, T. Mower Martin, stated in part: "... to tell a body of men in their chosen profession to turn to some better paying business . . . seems . . . not to be in the best taste." As his predecessors in the Week, however, Martin also argued that it was not money but aesthetic taste that was lacking.<sup>46</sup>

Letters and articles on Campbell's perceived rudeness abounded. However, it was Grip which saw the comedy of the Lieutenant-Governor's actions. In a cartoon bearing the caption "the opening of the Exhibition," Campbell was depicted complete with donkey ears, pushing his foot through a canvas and charging with a sword marked "ignorance."<sup>47</sup> While there was no doubt that the artists were more careful thereafter in their selection of a patron, it is equally probable that such figures were even more careful in their public pose as patrons of culture.

<sup>45</sup>"Sir Alexander Campbell And the Artists," Letters, Globe, 27 May 1889, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup>"The Lieutenant Governor And the O.S.A.," Letter, Week, 21 June 1889, p. 458.

<sup>47</sup>Grip, 8 June 1889, p. 359.

While provincial and federal heads of state lent their names and prestige to art exhibitions, support also came from a number of others. Although Toronto did not have a John Molson, George Stephen or William Van Horne, various Torontonians still purchased the works of the artists. Lucius O'Brien, for instance, recorded sales to the Honourable George Allan, T. G. Blackstock (lawyer and K. C.), the Honourable George Brown, C. Z. Gzowski (stockbroker), W. H. Howland (Mayor of Toronto), George Hague (General Manager, Merchant's Bank), Honourable Oliver Mowat (Premier of Ontario), Judge MacMahon, E. B. Osler (Financier and Stockbroker, firm of Osler & Hammond), William Ramsay (Manager, Standard Life), and Byron E. Walker (Director, Bank of Commerce). Other wealthy financiers such as the Goodermans and the Ridouts were also listed as purchasers in O'Brien's Studio book.<sup>48</sup>

In addition there were the individuals who supported the arts by becoming honorary patrons of the Academy. Of some four hundred and fifty people who originally subscribed in 1880, the largest number came from Ontario. Over two hundred listed Ottawa as their address (this, of course, included politicians). Toronto was the second most listed city for about seventy-five members, while the rest of Ontario accounted for another fifty. Typical pro-

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<sup>48</sup> Lucius O'Brien, Studio Journal, Art Gallery of Ontario.

fessions of the Toronto patrons included education, journalism, law, and the ministry. Of those engaged in business, insurance and the railroad were typical. One might say, therefore, that, in addition to the wealthy and politicians, it was the "middle-brows" who supported the Royal Canadian Academy and its parent organization, the Ontario Society of Artists.<sup>49</sup>

It was to these types of people, rather than governments that painters should look as their patron, both the Globe and the Mail counselled.<sup>50</sup> For, in spite of official organizations like the Royal Society and the Royal Canadian Academy, official patronage was on the wane in the late Victorian period as people began to question what useful function such patronage had served in improving artistic or literary production. As the Mail observed, the old regime of patronage where painters were the hangers-on of rich men was over because "the Midas Touch never gave life to pigment yet."<sup>51</sup> It also noted that when governments became involved in patronage, they either got "hold of the wrong man" or created "jealousies."

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<sup>49</sup>Figures are taken from List of Honourary Members of the Royal Canadian Academy, 1880. Sampling of professions based on biographical material in Morgan.

<sup>50</sup>"Art in Canada," Globe, 21 June 1887, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup>"Local Art," Editorial, Mail, 22 April 1893, p. 6.

Still, the Globe sponsored two poets, Archibald Lampman and William Wilfred Campbell, in suits for government patronage. In an editorial entitled, "Concerning Archibald Lampman and Sir John Macdonald" the Globe described Lampman's position in the Post Office Department as "very ill-paid and laborious" and urged that the government reward Lampman for his literary service to the country by giving him the "next soft place" in the civil service.<sup>52</sup>

A similar plea was made for Campbell. An editorial headed, "The Case of Mr. W.W. Campbell" castigated Prime Minister Abbott's stand that Campbell could not be promoted without injustice to others in the civil service. Pointing to the example of Martin Griffin who had been promoted to the library as a reward for his services as editor of the Mail, a Conservative paper, the Globe suggested:

... so long as service which benefits one political party is recognized as a reason for appointment to the civil service, it ought to be possible to find a place there for a man whose work has benefited the whole country and appreciably enhanced its literary output.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Globe, 12 March 1890, p. 4. E.W. Thomson has been identified as the author of the article. See: Helen Lynn, An Annotated Edition of the Correspondence Between Archibald Lampman and Edward William Thomson (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1980).

<sup>53</sup>"The Case of Mr. W.W. Campbell," Globe, 31 May 1892, p. 4.



This was not the only time a journal promoted a literary personage. However, on other occasions they turned their efforts toward the public rather than government. When it was revealed that Alexander McLachlan (1818-1896), a well-known poet of pioneer and labour themes, was in financial straits, both the daily newspapers and Grip came to his rescue. Grip Magazine offered McLachlan a sinecure by appointing him resident poet. Ironically, the magazine readiest to aid a poet was the one which poked fun at the pretensions of the literati. As Grip put it, by so employing McLachlan, they secured the "enviable distinction" of removing the reproach that McLachlan had "received but scant justice at the hands of those who assume to be the special guardians of Canadian Literature."<sup>54</sup>

A fund-raising campaign on McLachlan's behalf sponsored among others by the Globe indicates that Grip was not alone in seeking this "distinction." Funds which were solicited throughout Ontario could be left at the various branches of the newspaper. An editorial in the Globe emphasized that a subscription to the fund was not an act of charity, but an honour because of McLachlan's poetic reputation.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>"Important Literary Announcement," Grip, 8 May 1886.

<sup>55</sup>"The McLachlan Testimonial," Editorial, Globe, 19 Dec. 1887, p. 2.

The campaign on behalf of McLachlan was launched at a large public meeting on December 8, 1887. Those present at the inaugural meeting of the fund-raising campaign included such people as, J.W. Bengough, David Boyle (Ontario archaeologist), Dr. Daniel Clark, R. Jaffray (Globe publisher), George Kennedy (Ontario Crown Lands Dept.), Alderman J.L. Morrison, J.S. Robertson, and Hon. G.W. Ross. Letters of regret were read from Sir John A. Macdonald and the Honourable Alexander Mackenzie.<sup>56</sup> The Mail called attention to the event in a long headline which described McLachlan as "The Poet Laureate" and stated: "Orations by Principal Grant, Hon. C.P. Ross and Dr. Daniel Clark Ensured Success of the Movement."<sup>57</sup> Letters subscribing to the fund and others suggesting a new edition of McLachlan's poetry appeared in succeeding months in response to the publicity generated.<sup>58</sup>

Cultural promotion seems to have been always accompanied by demotion or commotion, however. The campaign on McLachlan's behalf was no exception. In letters to both the Empire and the Mail, a correspondent who signed himself A. Stevenson, of Toronto, complained that the public was being carried away in granting too

<sup>56</sup>"A Poet Honoured," Mail, 9 Dec. 1887, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup>Mail, 9 Dec. 1887, p. 8.

<sup>58</sup>See: Globe, 22 Dec. 1887, p. 2; 4 Jan. 1888, p. 4; 21 Jan. 1888, p. 9.

much praise to McLachlan, who was not a great poet, but merely a "writer of verses."<sup>59</sup> Letters refuting Stevenson's charges of "mediocrity" soon appeared in response and the fund-raising campaign continued.<sup>60</sup>

Early in 1890 a testimonial dinner was held in Toronto for McLachlan. On that occasion he was presented with a cheque for twenty-one hundred dollars, a sum which McLachlan acknowledged would set him free "from those terrible embarrassments which shackled body and soul."<sup>61</sup>

Shortly after McLachlan's death in 1896, a biographical sketch of his life and works appeared in the Canadian Magazine. The author of the piece, a Donald McCaig (1832-1905), who had published a volume of poetry in 1894 entitled, Milestone Moods and Memories penned the usual lament that the public neglected Canadian authors, in this case McLachlan. As McCaig put it, "we . . . still slay the prophets and our children build their sepulchres, McLachlan's faith in his countrymen justified more generous treatment. He needed bread and they gave him a stone."<sup>62</sup> Certainly,

<sup>59</sup>"Canadian Poetry," Letter, Empire, 6 Jan. 1888, p. 5.  
 "Canadian Poetry," Letter, Mail, 7 Jan. 1888, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup>David Boyle, "Our Canadian Poet," Letter, Mail, 12 Jan. 1888, p. 8. Thomas O'Hagen, "Our Canadian Poet," Empire, 4 Feb. 1888.

<sup>61</sup>"Poet M'Lachlan," Globe, 29 April 1890, p. 8.

<sup>62</sup>Donald McCaig, "Alexander McLachlan," Canadian Magazine, 8 (April, 1897), 520-23.

sales of McLachlan's books could have been larger. Interestingly, however, the article made no mention of the funds raised on McLachlan's behalf or the dinner held in his honour. One surmises such an admission would have undercut the pathos of the story, but it would have helped to make the record more balanced.

Other Ontario groups held testimonial dinners as a means of public recognition for such literary figures as the poet Evan MacColl, and the novelist Gilbert Parker.<sup>63</sup> The latter was honoured at a banquet of the Toronto National Club in 1896. The club, whose aim was the "cultivation of national spirit," felt it appropriate to honour Parker as a "native born" who had brought before the English-speaking world "the Canada of the pinewood, of the voyageur, of the oldtime habitant."<sup>64</sup>

At the dinner, notable for its press contingent, J.S. Willison, editor of the Globe, discussed the attitude of the press to Canadian literature. He denied the charge that the newspapers neglected Canadian literature, but he argued that they would be merely "literary rag peddlars" if they promoted literary "rubbish." On the

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<sup>63</sup>"Poets and Poetry/Bard Evan MacColl Banquetted By His Admirers," Mail, 5 April 1890, p. 12.

<sup>64</sup>As the club's nationalism was of an imperialistic bent it was logical for them to choose Parker for their honours since he was living and publishing in England. "Gilbert Parker/The Novelist Banquetted at the National Club," Globe, 7 April 1896, p. 1.

other hand, Willison spoke glowingly of the work being done by such Canadians as Parker, Roberts, Lampman, Campbell, Carman and Thomson. He stated that it was fitting that the press should take a special interest in such people.<sup>65</sup>

As editor of the Globe, J.S. Willison was also instrumental in initiating the famous "Mermaid Inn" column, written by William Wilfred Campbell, Archibald Lampman and Duncan Campbell Scott. Evidently designed to help Campbell's financial difficulties, the column was another example of cultural promotion.<sup>66</sup> This was noted at the time by the Hamilton Herald, whose comments on the column were reprinted by the Globe:

The Globe is doing good work in encouraging young Canadian writers and interesting our people in the literary efforts of those who live around us . . . the Empire is always snarling at the Globe about its lack of loyalty but in many respects the Globe shows a good deal more practical loyalty than the Empire.<sup>67</sup>

In addition to testimonial dinners, literary evenings became popular thanks to the Young Men's Liberal Club of Toronto. This group held several such evenings beginning about 1888.<sup>68</sup> In that

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<sup>65</sup>Globe, 7 April 1896, p. 1.

<sup>66</sup>Carl Y. Connor, Archibald Lampman Canadian Poet of Nature, 2nd ed. (1929; Ottawa: Borealis, 1977), p. 113.

<sup>67</sup>Hamilton Herald, quoted in Globe, 9 Feb. 1892, p. 4.

<sup>68</sup>At least two other similar evenings took place, one in 1889 (Globe, 15 Jan. 1889); and another in 1891 (mentioned in Globe, 18 Jan. 1892).

year, a meeting chaired by J.S. Willison was devoted to a discussion of Canadian literature and a reading from the works of several poets.<sup>69</sup> The experiment was repeated several times, culminating in a Canadian Literature evening in 1892 when several poets and writers were invited to read from their works. Frank Yeigh, the Club's president, explained that in so encouraging Canadian writers, the club was helping to fulfil two of its primary objectives: studying the people and resources of Canada, and promoting a national spirit. He also described the influence of such an evening as spreading far beyond the actual members present, since it would encourage other groups to hold similar gatherings.<sup>70</sup>

The Globe began its report of the evening with an enthusiastic comment on the actual turnout:

That so crowded an audience gathered at the Art Gallery of the Ontario Society of Artists . . . does not support the theory that there is indifference among our people to native literature, for it was a gathering of the best people of the city come together to pay respect to Canadian authors . . . the attendance found the accommodation of the commodious gallery too small.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>"Canadian Literature/Discussed at Meeting of the Young Liberal Club," Mail, 15 Jan. 1888, p. 6.

<sup>70</sup>"Canadian Literature/An Evening With Canadian Authors," Globe, 18 Jan. 1892, p. 5.

<sup>71</sup>Globe, 18 Jan. 1892, p. 5.

In a separate editorial commenting on the "sturdy Canadianism" which distinguished the evening, the Globe concluded: "All literature that stimulates Canadian sentiment deserves the appreciation of Canadians. . . ."

The Literary Society of Victoria College also held an evening with Canadian authors in 1894.<sup>73</sup> In 1895, during its annual meeting, the Royal Society featured a poet's evening with readings from a number of poets.<sup>74</sup> Rather than acting as an agent of promotion in sponsoring this event, it seems, however, that the Royal Society was following the lead of others.

Canadian literature evenings and cultural lectures were also popular. In 1891, the Modern Language Club of University College devoted an evening to the consideration of Canadian literature. With a "capacity attendance" the evening featured two speakers: W.A. Philips, who discussed the obstacles hindering the development of Canadian literature, and Rev. Dr. Rand, who discussed the poems of Charles G.D. Roberts.<sup>75</sup>

While various groups promoted Canadian authors and literature, it was the artists themselves who took the lead in promoting

<sup>72</sup>"Canadian Night," Editorial, Globe, 18 Jan. 1892, p. 4.

<sup>73</sup>L. E. Horning, letter to W.D. Lighthall, 25 Jan. 1894, Lighthall Papers, McGill University.

<sup>74</sup>"Royal Society," Globe, 16 May 1895, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup>"Canadian Literature," Globe, 3 Feb. 1891, p. 5.

art. The Ontario Society of Artists, the Royal Canadian Academy and the Women's Art Association sponsored various lectures on the subject of art. Further, various artists held individual lectures in connection with their exhibitions. For example, in 1887, the Ontario Society of Artists had as a guest lecturer Henry Blackburn, editor of London Academy Notes.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, in 1895, the Women's Art Association invited Professor Fraser of University of Toronto to speak on Michelangelo.<sup>77</sup> Among the artists themselves, J.W.L. Forster, F.M. Bell-Smith and W.A. Sherwood spoke frequently on both Canadian and foreign art.<sup>78</sup>

The artists were in the forefront when it came to receptions for visiting celebrities. Henry M. Stanley, "The Hero of Africa," lectured in Toronto in 1890; at the close of his lecture he and his wife were received by the Ontario Society of Artists. Mrs. Stanley, evidently an artist herself, was presented with an album containing photographs of works by the various artists.<sup>79</sup> Such events were news, and kept the Society of Artists before the public.

<sup>76</sup>"Modern Painters' A Learned Lecture by Mr. Henry Blackburn on Art and Artists," Globe, 1 Nov. 1887, p. 8.

<sup>77</sup>"A Lecture On Art," Mail, 26 Jan. 1895, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup>F.M. Bell-Smith, advertisement for art lecture, Mail and Empire, 26 Nov. 1896. "Canadian Art/An Excellent Paper by Mr. J.W.L. Forster," Globe, 2 Feb. 1891, p. 8. "Mr. W.A. Sherwood Reads a Paper On Color," Empire, 17 July 1891.

<sup>79</sup>"The Hero of Africa," Globe, 28 Nov. 1890, p. 8.



Unlike the literary people, artists were careful to keep their relations with the press on the friendliest basis. At the opening of the first Royal Canadian Academy exhibition, the President, Lucius O'Brien, had paid tribute to the press for their help in promoting the first exhibition.<sup>80</sup> Certainly, O'Brien's private studio book indicates just how valuable he personally felt his press contacts to be.<sup>81</sup> But the best example of the accord sought between the artists and the press is revealed in two social evenings which were given in 1891. The first was an "At Home" to which the members of the Ontario Society of Artists invited the journalists of the various newspapers; and entertained them with songs, recitations and instrumental music. In addition, perhaps in concession to the spirit of prohibition becoming current at the time, refreshments of "coffee, lemonade and cake were provided."<sup>82</sup> A few weeks later, the journalists responded by inviting the artists to a "smoking Concert."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Globe, 8 March 1880, p. 4.

<sup>81</sup>O'Brien kept a careful record of those issued invitations to his various open studio events. The names of journalists on most of the Toronto newspapers are prominent. Studio Journal, Art Gallery of Ontario.

<sup>82</sup>"Artists and Journalists," Globe, 26 Jan. 1891, p. 8.

<sup>83</sup>"An Academy Night," Mail, 30 March 1891, p. 8.

The News described these events as evidence of a "closer union between these brothers in art."<sup>84</sup> The list of those present again indicates that the artists also wooed their patrons. Names like Currie, Ketchum and Ridout are notable.

While the literary group was forever condemning the press for its lack of support, it is clear that they too realized its significance as a vehicle for promotion and that they made frequent use of it. This is readily seen in a practice described as "booming" or the artificial promotion of a poet by his friends through various critical articles which purported to be unbiased. That this practice was widespread in Canada is supported by a satirical article in Grip entitled: "How To Become a Native Canadian Litterateur." Five points were drafted by a "prominent member of the Royal Canadian Academy" supposedly to be submitted to the group at their next "seance." The fifth and final guideline is of interest here:

Work the mutual admiration racket, by mentioning favourably all the other native Canadian writers—especially, of course, Prof. Goldwin Smith and C. G. D. Roberts: They will naturally praise you in return. It is needless to say that criticisms and articles upon Canadian writers form the staple of 'Canadian literature,' distinctively so called.<sup>85</sup>

On another occasion, an even more pointed jibe appeared in Grip. This was an eight-verse "lay, perhaps satiric" entitled "To

<sup>84</sup>"Brothers In Arts," News, 26 Jan. 1891, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup>"How To Become a Native Litterateur," Grip, 6 April 1889, p. 213.

The Literary Frogs Who Try To Blow Each Other Into Bulls." In part, it read:

Self-praise 'tis said is small recommendation,  
 Dame Etiquette proclaims it rather rude;  
 But how one loves to hear the adulation  
 Of some dear friend's loud utter'd platitude,  
 And to return with fulsome admiration  
 Sweet compliments unbound by latitude;  
 In short, a mutual puff gives so much pleasure  
 That next to scandal 'tis the art we treasure.

The verses went on to describe the "mutual puffing" process in which Euphemia praised a volume by Eugene with the result:

Tomorrow, innocent of witticism,  
 Eugene will pen, as sure as grass is green,  
 A sky-high paean of Euphemia's volume  
 And chant her praises by the ill-paid column.<sup>86</sup>

In an article entitled "Critics and Criticism" published in the Week, Ethelwyn Wetherald observed that the relation between critic and writer was a direct one; if the one reviewed the other's work in a certain manner, the other would respond to the first's work in a similar manner.<sup>87</sup>

Certainly, articles in various periodicals are an eloquent testimonial of this unsavory practice. The influence of E. W. Thomson as leader writer of the Globe in the 1880s, and the presence of J. S. Willison in the 1890s would also in part explain

<sup>86</sup>"To the Literary Frogs Who Try To Blow Each Other Into Bulls," Grip, 13 April 1889, p. 23.

<sup>87</sup>"Critics and Criticism," Week, 31 Mar. 1887, p. 281.

the space devoted to Canadian writers in that journal, while the sympathetic treatment of Canadian writers in the periodicals derives in part from that fact that many of the contributors were aspiring writers themselves. It can also be conjectured that the space devoted to Canadian writers in American magazines was not simply because of their "international reputation" but because of the presence of people like Bliss Carman and E.W. Thomson on the editorial boards of these magazines.

The poets were also aware of the pressure which the press could exert in favour of various causes as is evidenced by a series of letters exchanged between Charles G.D. Roberts and various of his friends. Roberts, at that time a professor at King's College in the Maritimes, was negotiating a position as Professor of English at the Toronto university. He requested a number of friends to help his case by writing to the various newspapers to promote the appointment of a Canadian. As he wrote to W.D. Lighthall, "Our chance is by appealing through the press to Canadianism—agitating for the appointment of a Canadian (my name merely understood not expressed). . . . If I do succeed it will only be through energetic efforts on the part of my friends."<sup>88</sup> Later, in writing to thank Lighthall for sending a letter to the Montreal Witness, Roberts

<sup>88</sup> C. G. D. Roberts, letter to W. D. Lighthall, 6 Nov. 1888. Lighthall Papers, McGill University.

stated the "Mail, Globe, World, Empire and Week in Toronto are all pledged to advocate the appointment of a Canadian. Also Saturday Night and Varsity will support me warmly."<sup>89</sup>

In another letter which praised the "genius" of Archibald Lampman's first volume of poetry, Roberts requested Lampman's help in promoting his suit for the position in Toronto: "Can you help the thing along. A letter to one of the big papers, Ottawa or Toronto would help much. 'A Government appointment is influenced by public opinion. . . .'"<sup>90</sup> Lampman evidently acquiesced and in a signed letter to the Empire, Lampman specifically mentioned Roberts in connection with the Toronto position. The letter, which bore the heading "A Canadian Candidate," read in part:

A few years ago it would have been accepted without debate that a fitting occupant of such a position could only be found in the old country . . . however . . . the time has come when the claims of more than one of our countrymen are deserving of very serious consideration. . . . I understand that the name of Professor C. G. D. Roberts . . . has been prominently put forward in this connection and I hasten to add one more word to his fame. . . .<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>C. G. D. Roberts, Letter to W. D. Lighthall, n.d. Lighthall Papers, McGill University.

<sup>90</sup>C. G. D. Roberts, letter to A. Lampman, 18 Dec. 1888. Typescript, M. O. Hammond Papers, Baldwin Room, Toronto Public Library.

<sup>91</sup>A. Lampman, letter. Empire, 10 Jan. 1889, p. 6.

Roberts' campaign for a Canadian worked better than he had imagined. However, it was another Canadian who got the job—W.J. Alexander, an alumnus of Toronto whose credentials included a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins. Thus, he was better qualified than Roberts, who held only an M.A.<sup>92</sup>

The Literati continually looked to one another for support in aid of their mutual endeavours. When Frances Harrison's book of poetry was about to be published she wrote to W.D. Lighthall stating: "I am naturally looking for assistance from my literary friends and all promoters of literature. . . ." <sup>93</sup> With somewhat more humility, E. Pauline Johnson wrote to Lighthall discussing her success and attributing it to promotion: "... were it not for my friends . . . I would never stand where I do. My work would be little without the 'booming' . . . ." <sup>94</sup>

Such "booming" helps to put into context the quarrel which W.W. Campbell precipitated in 1895 and which was carried on in the pages of the Toronto World and the Globe. Carl F. Klinck refers to the episode in his biography of Campbell calling it "a tempest in the Canadian literary teapot," a tempest which Klinck

<sup>92</sup>W. Stewart Wallace, A History of the University of Toronto 1827-1927 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1927), p. 141.

<sup>93</sup>Frances Harrison, letter to W.D. Lighthall, 2 Oct. 1888. W.D. Lighthall Papers, McGill University.

<sup>94</sup>E. Pauline Johnson, letter to W.D. Lighthall, 2 Oct. 1888. W.D. Lighthall Papers, McGill University.

feels the Globe "tried to laugh off" by featuring it as a poetic war.<sup>95</sup> No doubt there was an element of parody in headlines which read: "The Battle of The Poets," "The Attack On Bliss Carman," "The War Of The Poets," "The Poet Campbell On The Warpath," and "Before The War." The fact remains, nonetheless, that the controversy was carried on publicly for a number of weeks, and, in an era of personal journalism, charges and counter charges aimed at various members of the literary guild must have been newsworthy. Certainly, the Globe felt the affair had an aura of comedy about it, for in the midst of the controversy they carried a parody on it. A heavy black-framed letter entitled "A Deserving Canadian Poet" and signed with the mock-literary appellation, "Bavius MacFlecknoe," was featured in the Saturday edition. Parodying the charges in the Campbell quarrel, "MacFlecknoe" indicated that his exclusion from the Victorian Anthology of Poets and Chambers' Encyclopedia resulted entirely from the personal animosity of the editor and was motivated by a "furious mania" to annihilate his literary prospects "for posterity." The article concluded that the public ought to know about this "abominable conspiracy" against MacFlecknoe and his "incomparable poems."<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Carl F. Klinck, William Wilfred Campbell (1942: Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1977), pp. 97-101.

<sup>96</sup>"A Deserving Canadian Poet," Globe, 20 July 1895, p. 15.

If nothing else, the controversy emphasized the tendencies of the Canadian literary group which Dent had outlined in his conclusion to The Last Forty Years, a history of Canada since the union of Upper and Lower Canada. Describing the "one danger" against which Canadian men of letters should be on guard, Dent stated: "There is a decided propensity to envy and detraction in certain literary circles . . . there is a considerable leaven of uncharitableness."<sup>97</sup> As Saturday Night pointed out at the time, Campbell had been treated unfairly by his literary brethren; unfortunately, Campbell's reaction had showed his own lack of regard for others.<sup>98</sup> All were acting on one assumption which Dent had unwittingly isolated in the final sentence of his book: "Success is the primary criterion of merit."<sup>99</sup> And it was for (success they were all striving, even at the expense of others.

If "booming" was the particular form literary people used to promote themselves and their friends, while doing their best to detract attention from others, those engaged in the visual arts had other equivalent methods. One of the most important of these arose from the actual selection and hanging of various painters'

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<sup>97</sup>The Last Forty Years (Toronto: George Virtue, 1881), 2, 592.

<sup>98</sup>"Books and Authors," Saturday Night, 11 May 1895, p. 5.

<sup>99</sup>Dent, p. 593.



works. The Hanging Committees of the various exhibitions held the ultimate power of selection and positioning of pictures, a power which enabled them to "boom" an artist or "demote" him as they pleased. Frequent complaints of favoritism appeared in the newspapers.

Commenting on the combined Royal Canadian Academy and Ontario Society of Artists exhibition of 1883, the Mail noted that the task of selection was always a delicate one and that it was a pity that it was undertaken "by those who have pictures to be hung." Pointing to the Academy rule concerning the total number of pictures any one individual could hang, the Mail decried the fact that it had been "glaringly transgressed by prominent members whose pictures, the Mail felt, had a "great sameness" and monopolized so much space that other artists were excluded from the exhibition.<sup>100</sup> This same complaint was later taken up by a correspondent to the Mail who remarked that he had heard a number of paintings had had to be rejected for want of space. He was, therefore, surprised at the quality of some of the pictures that were hung and of the large number of pictures certain exhibitors were permitted to display. He queried:

Is it possible that a society ostensibly established for the promotion of art would

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<sup>100</sup>"The Academy Exhibition," Mail, 1 June 1883, p. 8.

be influenced by spite and malice or be controlled by a 'ring' or 'clique' who were resolved to exhibit their works and the works of their friends to the number of eighteen or twenty each, and exclude totally the works of honest worth painted by rival artists of a rival city.<sup>101</sup>

Such criticisms were of frequent occurrence. A Globe critic, reviewing the Royal Canadian Academy exhibition in 1891, commented that the Hanging Committee was a body which could "inflict grievous injustice." While that particular Committee had in the main carried out their duties fairly, the Globe felt that one or two were entitled to more consideration than they had received. Evidently, the works of Marmaduke Matthews and McGillivray Knowles had been "widely scattered" over the rooms and exhibited in "frigid isolation," while those of other artists, whom the critic felt had less ability, were hung together "to testify with united voice to the glories of their creator."<sup>102</sup>

In Grip, complaints about Hanging Committee abuses were regularly satirized. Occasional cartoons alluded to the practices of "flooring" or "skying" pictures.<sup>103</sup> A letter which parodied

<sup>101</sup>"The Ontario Society of Artists and Royal Academy," Letter, Mail, 28 June 1883, p. 2. As the letter gives Hamilton, Ontario as the address, it is probable that the writer is alluding to the large number of Toronto exhibitors and the exclusion of Hamilton exhibitors.

<sup>102</sup>"Last Day At the Academy," Globe, 21 March 1891, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup>Grip, 8 March 1890, p. 172; 14 June 1890, p. 395.

those appearing in the newspapers described the Hanging Committee as guilty of two crimes: "...of Flooring or Skying all the works of 'undoubted merit,' talent and genius—when they did not altogether exclude them—and hanging on the line nothing but their own 'daubs,' 'fence-painting,' 'school-girl and learners essays.'" The parody concluded that such treatment arose "from motives of greed, spite, jealousy and fear."<sup>104</sup> This particular abuse seems to have been alleviated in the mid-nineties when at least the Ontario Society of Artists changed its method of selection to one in which the whole membership voted on the selection of pictures.<sup>105</sup>

Within the small Toronto art circle, the continuing conflict between Lucius O'Brien and his rival, John A. Fraser, which caused a split in the artistic fellowship, was also carried on within the pages of the newspapers and the periodicals.<sup>106</sup> No doubt, it was either Fraser or a member supporting him who wrote a letter to

<sup>104</sup>"The Truth About the Academy Exhibition," Grip, 16 June 1888, p. 7.

<sup>105</sup>"At the Art Gallery," Mail and Empire, 21 May 1896, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup>Dennis Reid described the history of this conflict at length. The origins of the animosity between the two men dated back to the 1870s. It intensified after the creation of the Academy when O'Brien, as President of the Royal Canadian Academy, was singled out for particular Royal commissions; and when, as artistic director of Picturesque Canada, O'Brien turned down Fraser's submissions to that volume. The newspapers played a large role in making that quarrel public. This was particularly evident on one occasion when Fraser managed to have a review of his work on the same day in which O'Brien's royal commissions were being unveiled. As Reid pointed out, it was an obvious attempt to detract from the importance of O'Brien's commissions. See: Reid, pp. 298-344.

the Globe describing the inefficiency of the new Royal Canadian Academy and its Vice-President. Its remarks were strongly reminiscent of the complaints about the Royal Society. The author noted that two years had passed since the Academy had been founded. To date, however, little had been accomplished. The letter lamented the fact that the Vice-President had not taken a more active role in the management of the Academy. This would have helped to check the "self-seeking" aims of those who were using the academy to promote their own interests.<sup>107</sup>

Generally, any type of cultural promotion seems to have been accompanied by commotion and demotion. Even the two best-known cultural publications of the 1880s were not exempt from these growing pains. Picturesque Canada and Songs of the Great Dominion were examples of the great promotional spirit in the air and, equally, were examples of the spirit of dissension which pervaded the cultural scene. Both publications were concerned with demonstrating the magnificence of Canada's history and resources and were loudly advertised as Canadian productions. The editors of Picturesque Canada were criticised for employing Americans. Conversely, the controversy which followed in the wake of the publication of Songs of the Great Dominion criticised the editor for being

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<sup>107</sup>"Royal Canadian Academy of Arts," Letter, Globe, 1 Feb. 1882, p. 5.

too Canadian in his selections.

Picturesque Canada, The Country as it was and is (1882), was edited by G. M. Grant (1835-1902), Principal of Queen's University, with the art work under the direction of Lucius O'Brien. It was in the vein of a number of illustrated, descriptive books of the nineteenth century. Touted as a stirring example of "national progress" which would draw attention to Canada's "material" and "aesthetic advancement," the book was advertised and received laudatory reviews as an entirely Canadian production.<sup>108</sup> Toronto was the place of publication, however; the Beldon Company was essentially an American company. Further, Lucius O'Brien who, as President of the Royal Canadian Academy surely ought to have been promoting Canadian artists, seems to have utilized Americans to do the bulk of the work for the illustrations.<sup>109</sup> Naturally, this resulted in recriminations amongst the Toronto circle of artists.

Conversely, criticism of Songs of the Great Dominion (1889), arose from the editor's choice of theme and his selection of Canadian poets. Edited by W. D. Lighthall (1857-1954), a Montreal lawyer and author, the book was the first post-Confederation anthology of Canadian poetry. The volume was published in England

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<sup>108</sup>"Art Progress in Canada," Globe, 24 May 1881; p. 5.

<sup>109</sup>Reid; pp. 298-316.

as part of a series presenting work from various parts of the Empire. William Sharpe, the British general editor, encouraged Lighthall to make the volume as distinctive in local colour as possible.<sup>110</sup>

In selecting only those poems which illustrated the "country and its life in a distinctive way," Lighthall was forced to exclude non-descriptive poetry.<sup>111</sup> This meant an uneven representation of the work of certain poets and, worse, the exclusion of others. As Charles D. Roberts, the acknowledged dean of Canadian poets, wrote to Lighthall, such a course would "fail to represent fully the development of Canadian song."<sup>112</sup>

By the time the volume had been circulated and was beginning to receive public comment in the summer of 1889, it was evident that Lighthall's choice of theme and selection had aroused dissension with the literary circles.<sup>113</sup> Although reviews applauded the book's appearance, the tone of the reviews indi-

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<sup>110</sup>William Sharpe, letter to W.D. Lighthall, 19 July 1888. Lighthall Papers, McGill University.

<sup>111</sup>W.D. Lighthall, ed. Introduction, Songs of the Great Dominion (1889; Toronto: Coles, 1971), p. xxxiv.

<sup>112</sup>C.G.D. Roberts, letter to W.D. Lighthall, 19 July 1888. Lighthall Papers, McGill University.

<sup>113</sup>C.G.D. Roberts, letter to W.D. Lighthall, 30 Sept. 1888. Lighthall Papers, McGill University.

cated a mixed reaction.<sup>114</sup> Grip was much more direct. A column titled "Wailing Warblers" (a parody of letters to the editor), described the "wrath and woe" which the "compilation of characteristic Canadian warblements" had caused in about two-thirds of the lyricists. Mock letters from a cross-section of the poetic community all described the anthology as "grossly incomplete and unrepresentative," because the individual letter writers had been excluded from the volume.<sup>115</sup>

Grip's comments were not far off the mark as a private letter from E.W. Thomson of the Globe to the poet A. Ethelwyn Wetherald indicated. Thomson wrote candidly to his friend on the subject of Songs of the Great Dominion. After acknowledging the merit of some poems by Lampman and Crawford, "one good thing" by Barry Dane, and "some stuff by Roberts, and Carmen . . . marred . . . by affectation," the letter went on to call Charles Sangster "a verse-making noodle" and W.D. Lighthall "an ass in verse" whose editorial preface was "unmitigated trash." Thomson felt that most of the book was "rubbish," although he acknowledged:

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<sup>114</sup>A review in the Globe stated that the book did not contain "much absolute rubbish," and the Week suggested the volume gave "promise of better things to come." See: "Literary Notes," Globe, 5 July 1889, p. 4, and "A New Canadian Anthology," Week, 7 June 1889, p. 421.

<sup>115</sup>"Wailing Warblers," Grip, 20 July 1889, p. 38.

"I am sore that you are not there and sore that I am not myself."<sup>116</sup>

The discord engendered over the publication of both volumes was not merely the result of petty jealousies, however. In a period when the arts were just becoming established, every opportunity for employment, publication, or publicity was vital to painters and authors. It is little wonder that they were less than charitable when they felt they were denied opportunities for promotion, no matter how tenuous these may have been.

The final example of cultural promotion to be discussed in this chapter was one carried on by the newspapers themselves. In the 1880s and 1890s, Christmas supplements, which featured the work of Canadians, became popular with a number of journals including the Globe, the Mail, the News and Saturday Night, to name a few. At first these were confined to poems and short stories; later, these also featured illustrations by Canadian artists. As with the volumes Picturesque Canada and Songs of the Great Dominion, these supplements were touted for their Canadian make-up. As an announcement for the 1889 Christmas Globe proclaimed: "Remember this is Canadian" and it pointed to the fact that the supplement featured "Canadian Scenes," "Canadian Artists," "Canadian Printers," "Canadian Writers," "Canadian Lithographers," "Canadian Press

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<sup>116</sup>E.W. Thomson, letter to A.E. Wetherald, 25 June 1889, M.O. Hammond Papers, Archives of Ontario.



Work," and "Canadian Binding."<sup>117</sup> In another reading notice, the Globe stated that its Christmas number

... has a peculiar interest for our own people. It stirs the patriotism of Canadians. It will set Canada before the world. It should be widely circulated in every province in the Confederation. . . . Its illustrations, its stories, its poems and sketches are from all over Canada. It covers the Dominion and appeals to every class of our population.<sup>118</sup>

While it is obvious that these supplements were designed to stimulate circulation by appealing to the patriotic aspects of their Canadian content, at the same time they provided a unique opportunity for Canadian artists and authors to make themselves known to a large forum.

In 1885, the Globe's Christmas promotion scheme went even further with the offer of a gift and the lure of a contest.<sup>119</sup> With each copy of the Christmas Globe purchased, subscribers were promised the gift of an art reproduction entitled "Miss Canada."

In addition, the Globe sponsored a literary contest with cash prizes, a contest in which the public would act as the judges. A ballot was included in the Christmas Globe and the public was to cast their

<sup>117</sup>Globe, 16 Nov. 1889, p. 5.

<sup>118</sup>"The Christmas Globe," Globe, 28 Nov. 1889, p. 1.

<sup>119</sup>"Christman Globe—Special Holiday Number," Globe, 2 Dec. 1885, p. 4.

voted for the best five stories out of the twenty-odd stories appearing in the supplement.

As promised, the Christmas Globe of 1885 had all the advertising features; it was comprised of twenty-four pages with a front page illustration of "Christmas Family Dinner" and contained a variety of stories, both anonymous and signed. These stories varied from tales of adventure, pioneer hardships and romantic love stories, to legends; but they all had a common feature—a Canadian setting. In the midst of the stories, a blank ballot appeared, to be filled in and returned by the reader.

During the month of January 1886, readers were reminded to send in their votes before the deadline of January 16th. The report of the "Committee to Count Ballots" (Rev. W. H. Withrow, Editor of The Canadian Methodist Magazine and Archibald Blue, Minister of Agriculture for Ontario and a former journalist) announced the winning story on February 4, 1886. Many years later, A. Ethelwyn Wetherald, one of the story contributors, was to record the incident:

In the fall of the year . . . the Globe got up a Christmas number of a novel sort. Short stories were invited by every sort—all original. Of these (several hundred in number . . .) twenty of the best were selected and of those twenty the one which received the greatest number of votes was to have the prize. . . . But of course the prize went to the social favorite whose friends by the score bought Globes and signed and returned coupons.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>A. E. Wetherald, letter to M. O. Hammond, 13 March, no yr., Hammond Papers, Archives of Ontario.

It seems even here that cultural aspirants promoted themselves through their friends. Wetherald's comments also indicate that some thirty years later she was still piqued at the manner in which the winner had achieved his success.

Certainly, the question of promotion was vital to authors and painters who were struggling to establish themselves in Canadian society. It is evident that they did not struggle alone. Many groups aided them in their endeavours. Against this background, one must question the validity of complaints that nothing was being done to help foster the arts. As late as 1896, for instance, Thomas O'Hagen wrote in the Week as follows:

How much is their [sic] being really done to foster Canadian poetry? Is not most of our appreciation of Canadian literature naught but empty cheers for him who is running the course in the arena equipped with little but a strong and patriotic heart and handicapped, perhaps, by a weight of drudgery and the fear of hunger . . . we have a duty greater than that of being proud of our Canadian poets. . . . It is to manifest practical appreciation of their worth. 121.

Likewise, the newspapers were continually accused of ignoring the cultural scene. As we have seen, this simply does not hold true for Toronto newspapers. Weighed against the actual newspaper coverage of literary and visual culture, one can only conclude that such protests were meant to prod newspapers into actually increasing that coverage rather than merely declaiming its

<sup>121</sup>"The Future of Canadian Poetry," Letter. Week, 24 July 1896, pp. 834-35.

total absence.

The newspapers truly befriended painters and writers. Daily journals reported their activities and actively promoted various individuals. At the same time, cautionary notes registered in the newspapers provided a realistic appraisal of the actual social and cultural conditions in which the artists and writers were labouring. In general, while promotional efforts were not always effective, painters and authors certainly were not ignored by either the newspapers or other segments of society.

If anything, the difficulty often lay with the creative artists themselves. For, they, like the rest of society, were not always unified and even organizations such as the Royal Society which should have promoted that unity, did not always succeed in doing so.<sup>122</sup> Rivalries and dissensions plagued both the small group of artists and the scattered band of writers. Finally, the actual promotional methods these groups used (such as "booming" and small "hanging committees") ensured that rather than contributing to the positive development of the arts, interpersonal relationships would always be strained.

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<sup>122</sup>As a critic in the Week wrote: "There was a slight hope raised once that the Royal Society of Canada might be the unifier of Canadian thought and literature. . . . But for one reason or another, it certainly has failed to do anything of the kind." "The Critic," Week, 3 March 1896, p. 324.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE FOOD OF MAMMON: THE PROTECTIONIST IMPULSE

What do poets want with gold  
Cringing slaves and cushioned ease;  
Are not crusts and garments old  
Better for their souls than these?

A. Lampman

Lampman's lines "What do poets want with gold" are a poetic version of the romantic notion that poverty and starvation provide the necessary stimulus to create. This idealized picture of the underfed author or painter locked away from the world in his ill-housed garret has a long and widespread history. It was unthinkable that true artists, whose concerns were "beauty and truth," would stoop to the level of mere materialistic concerns. For, as Lampman continues, "Give the simple poet gold, And his song will die of cold."<sup>1</sup> Rather, the artist sacrificed himself so that the world might be enriched by his work.

In the late nineteenth century when the arts were increasingly becoming viewed as professions, such an attitude was more wishful thinking than the actual reality. While authors and painters may have preferred to isolate themselves from society, the need

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<sup>1</sup>A. Lampman, Among the Millet (Ottawa: J. Durie & Son, 1888), pp. 58-59.

for publication and sales of their products thrust them into the marketplace. Ever-increasing competition in these fields, as in the other trades and professions, meant that organization and protection would be viewed as a necessary evil if the artists were to succeed.

In the rising industrial society of Toronto and southern Ontario of the second half of the nineteenth century, anyone who wanted to make good was bound by the relative standards of the marketplace. It was a marketplace which was governed by the theories of Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo. Their theories became expressed as the virtues of self denial, hard work and free enterprise. But these ideals of Hebraism had become a leviathan. Sporadic attempts to deal with the resulting dehumanization manifested themselves in a protective impulse. Collective action and regulated competition became a means to offset the worst debilitating effects of the utilitarian ethic.<sup>2</sup>

Historian Michael Bliss, has demonstrated that much of the social history of Ontario and central Canada can be explained in

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<sup>2</sup>The protective impulse was a widespread phenomenon, evident both in England and America. Karl Polanyi has shown that the protectionist movement was in part an effort to harmonize the conditions of economic liberalism which had reduced men to puppets. Collectivist measures were both economic and social. See: The Great Transformation (1944, rpt.; Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).

terms of the protective impulse.<sup>3</sup> Federally, the Conservatives under Sir John A. Macdonald had been returned to power in 1878 on a platform of protection known as the National Policy. It was designed to stimulate the growth of Canadian industry by "incidental" protective tariffs, government-assisted transcontinental transportation and a scheme of immigration. The National Policy was a political manifestation of the protective impulse at work. While the most visible aspect of protection, the National Policy, however, was only one example of this effort to curb the free marketplace.

Collective action formed the motivation behind the establishment of business combines and trade unions; it also resulted in such diverse practices as early store closing and the establishment of professional organizations. The former meant that no one merchant could monopolize trade by remaining open later than his competitors; the latter standardized practices and controlled competition by limiting membership particularly in the establishment of entrance qualifications. Such measures ensured that businessmen would make a "living profit" and workers would receive a "living wage." The results of such collective actions were ambiva-

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<sup>3</sup>Michael Bliss, "The Protective Impulse: An Approach to the Social History of Oliver Mowat's Ontario," in Oliver Mowat's Ontario, ed. Donald Swainson (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 174-188.

lent. In many cases social conditions were improved; nevertheless, restrictive practices led to some monopolist conditions which did little to improve society.<sup>4</sup>

In the same article, Bliss shows that the citizens of Ontario had a common aim of self-protection in business. The means they used to achieve their goals were "organizations, regulation and where possible legislation." His study also suggests that there was a relationship between the question of competition in economic life and the question of competition in other sectors of life such as education and philosophy. This became evident as society began to realize that the "competitiveness of life . . . was in itself a major source of tension."<sup>5</sup>

This chapter proposes to examine the phenomenon of protection and its relationship to the cultural aspects of literature and art in late nineteenth-century Ontario. For in the narrow field of cultural endeavour, competition was even more severe. Canadian workers laboured in a sphere dominated by the more sophisticated products of the United States and England. Just as other professions closed ranks and attempted to act collectively, so the vocations of literature and art manifested a protectionist impulse. The professions and trades utilized the rhetoric of improving societal

<sup>4</sup>Bliss, pp. 174-88.

<sup>5</sup>Bliss, pp. 174-88.



conditions as the rationale behind protectionist measures. Similarly, those engaged in the arts employed the cant of patriotism as the basis for their efforts in this direction. Once again, newspapers and journals were both vehicles of information on the protectionist debate as well as active participants in the battle between cultural "free trade" and cultural "protection."

Indeed, the debate was almost as old as Adam Smith's theories. As early as 1833, the editor of The Canadian Literary Magazine had appealed for subscription support to his home market on the basis of patriotism: "I . . . hope that I shall receive the support of every individual who feels a desire that Canada should possess a literature of its own: ~~for~~ without such individual support my undertaking must fall to the ground."<sup>6</sup> However, the support was lacking and the market proved too small. Consequently, the venture soon failed. Many subsequent publishing ventures were also doomed to flounder, and foreign competition became both a significant cause and a scapegoat for such ill-fortunes.

In turn, these recurrent publishing failures led to a demand for protection. By 1858, no less a figure than D'Arcy McGee was agitating for "Protection for Canadian Literature." McGee, a poet, as well as a politician, emphasized that if the reading public could

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<sup>6</sup>"The Editor's Address to the Public," The Canadian Literary Magazine, 1 (April, 1833).

obtain cheaper reading material elsewhere they would not "patronize a dearer home market." His argument for protection was based on the need to foster a national literature as a stimulus to patriotism: "Every country, every nationality, every people must create and foster a National Literature, if it is their wish to preserve a distinct individuality from other nations."<sup>7</sup>

Suggesting that if precautions were not taken to ensure the development of a national literature, the distinguishing features of a people would disappear, McGee advocated two particular measures. He urged that Canadian publishers be released from the prohibitive restrictions of the Imperial Copyright Act. He also argued that a protective tariff be placed on foreign books as a means to develop "the talent and enterprise of the country."<sup>8</sup>

The need for a protective tariff would be stressed again and again. However, it would only begin to have some results when those engaged in the creative arts began to work together in collective action.

It is no coincidence that the Royal Canadian Academy and the Royal Society were founded in the early 1880s. As we have seen, the Marquis of Lorne was the prime mover in the inception

<sup>7</sup>"Protection for Canadian Literature," 1858: rpt. The Search for English Canadian Literature, ed. Carl Ballstadt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), pp. 21-24.

<sup>8</sup>McGee, pp. 21-24.

of these two organizations. It can be argued, however, that their creation was also due to the temper of the times. Individual efforts to establish a Canadian literature had been frustrated. Collective efforts of the Ontario Society of Artists were too localized. Thus, national collective action with its resultant lobbying power became viewed as another means to foster these arts. In the political realm, the idealistic nationalism of the two decades following Confederation had faded and been replaced by a sentiment "canalized along economic lines."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, in the cultural field idealism was more and more supplanted by pragmatism.

The Royal Canadian Academy, in part, owed its existence to the internal wrangling within the Ontario Society of Artists. From its inception, the Ontario Society of Artists had attempted to widen its base from a local association based in Toronto to one with national pretensions. However, internal disagreements had prevented the group from enlarging their organization.<sup>10</sup> So, when Lorne presented his scheme to create a national association at a meeting of the Ontario Society of Artists (held in Toronto in September, 1879), the group immediately responded. A resolution

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<sup>9</sup>Frank Underhill, "The First Fine Careless Rapture, Canadian Nationalism in the 1870s and 1880s," The Image of Confederation (Toronto: C.B.C., 1964), pp. 13-23.

<sup>10</sup>Ontario Society of Artists, Minute Book, 1872-1880, Archives of Ontario. See, also Reid, pp. 22-23.

was passed supporting the establishment of an academy "to embrace the whole Dominion."<sup>11</sup> Of course, this was before the members of the Society realized that they would not all be a part of this august body. At any rate, the draft proposals were submitted for consideration to The Montreal Art Association, the only other group of artists in existence at the time. Consequently, a constitution was approved by the two local associations which would form the basis of the Academy.

The objectives of the new Academy indicate that the artists viewed it as a means of improving their professional prospects. These were: "the encouragement of Design as applied to Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Engraving and the Industrial Arts, and the promotion and support of education leading to the production of beautiful and excellent work in manufactures."<sup>12</sup> "Encouragement," "promotion" and "support" were all possible through collective action.

Lucius O'Brien, a Toronto painter and the Academy's first president, described the necessity for the new group in a letter to the Montreal Herald: "We have great need of the culture, education and skill these academies represent; and . . . we have need of such

<sup>11</sup> Ontario Society of Artists, Minute Book, Sept. 1879.

<sup>12</sup> Constitution and Laws of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, p. 3.

encouragement and sympathy being accorded to our artists as will induce the ablest of them to remain in Canada." O'Brien admitted that the initial membership of the Canadian Academy would in no way match the calibre of the European academies. However, he emphasized that just as other resources were being developed, so Lorne desired that the field of art should be advanced. It is significant that the two reasons given for this development were economics and culture:

His Excellency the Governor-General coming from a country where the industrial and economic value of art is as well understood as its influence upon the higher mental culture of a people, was prepared from the first to do what was possible in organizing our resources in this as in other directions.

Hinting at the link between economics and culture, O'Brien went on to invoke the call to patriotism as the cause which bound the artists together:

... to refuse cooperation in a project designed to advance the interests of the whole country ... would have been unpatriotic in the extreme. They joined heartily in the movement, accepting at His Excellency's hands not only an honor but a trust and a weighty responsibility. . . . <sup>13</sup>

The "weighty responsibility," of course, was "the welding together" and "advancing in intellectual and material progress" . . . of those

<sup>13</sup>"The Editor of the Montreal Herald," reproduced in Records of the Founding of the Royal Canadian Academy By His Excellency the Marquis of Lorne And Her Royal Highness The Princess Louise (Toronto: 1891), pp. 7-9.

provinces which form the Dominion of Canada."<sup>14</sup> Thus, covered by the patriotic rhetoric of duty, the Royal Canadian Academy was launched as a vehicle for the artists to act collectively in overcoming their limitations and improving their material prospects.

O'Brien also stated that the Royal Canadian Academy would enable the public to have an opportunity to compare the work of artists scattered throughout the Dominion. According to him, such critical comparison would raise the standard of art production and public taste. While this concern with standards and aesthetics was laudable, it is significant that O'Brien realized the artists would materially benefit from improved taste: "With the improvement of public taste, and growing appreciation of good work, we need not fear the recognition and ultimate reward in Canada of those artists who have talent and honestly make the best use of it."<sup>15</sup> O'Brien viewed the Royal Canadian Academy as providing a useful function for both the public and the artists. Although he specifically indicates the manner in which the Academy will serve the public, the corollary is merely implied. The public will have increased opportunities for aesthetic education; the artists will enlarge the clientele for their products. For if an artist could paint R.C.A. after his signature, the buyer of the painting could be guaranteed

<sup>14</sup>Records, p. 8.

<sup>15</sup>Records, p. 9.

that it had a certain value.

In opening the first Academy exhibition (Ottawa, 1880), the Marquis of Lorne referred to some adverse criticism which had accompanied the formation of the Academy. He suggested that those who had been opposed to the Academy's formation had argued that Canada possessed no art of high enough merit to warrant such an institution. But Lorne countered that the new academicians were engaged in a patriotic undertaking. As evidence of this, he pointed to the fact that each academician was required to donate a painting to the new National Gallery. This was a "guarantee" of their interest in the "welfare" of Canadian art.<sup>16</sup>

Two years later, at the opening of the 1882 Academy exhibition, the Governor General described the successful history of the association in syndical terms which linked it to the national policy of Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservatives:

If we go back to the time at which it [the Royal Canadian Academy] was not; [sic] we go back to a period when the prevailing features of public life did not exist. We have to go back to when the word 'boom' was hardly understood in the country, when the word 'syndicate' was an almost unmeaning term, and when it was not necessary for Canadians physicians to throw up their hands in despair in their attempt to find an antidote to Manitoban and Northwestern fever.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup>"The Academy of Art," Globe, 8 March 1880, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup>"Royal Academy of Arts," Globe, 12 April 1882, p. 3.

In other words, prior to the National Policy, the country was in a slump. Following its establishment, western development had taken place so quickly that it almost had the proportions of an epidemic—although one that was heartily wished for. In referring to the success of both the Academy and the National Policy, obliquely the Marquis of Lorne was linking the Academy's fortunes to the protectionist policies which had apparently precipitated the prosperity the country was experiencing in the early eighteen eighties. He also seemed to be indicating that collective action was necessary for success.

Lord Lansdowne, in his opening address of 1887, was more explicit about the artists' need for collective action: "The age in which we live is one of combinations; and, in the case of the fine arts, concerted action is even more indispensable than it is in other pursuits and other professions."<sup>18</sup> That the artists had viewed the Academy in this light is revealed in Lorne's last address to that body. He described how the Academy had and could continue to act as a lobby with the government. Mentioning commissions which Louis Philippe Hébert and Robert Harris had received from the federal government, Lorne stated: "These are marked proofs that the position attained by our academicians is now

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<sup>18</sup> Lord Lansdowne, Address, Report of the Council of the Royal Canadian Academy for 1887, p. 14.



recognized, and it shows also . . . the influence a society like this may virtuously exercise upon the Government and the treasury."<sup>19</sup>

Even prior to the establishment of the Academy, the Ontario Society of Artists had realized that collective action could be an effective lobby with the government. In 1879, the Conservative government proceeded to introduce the tariff which would protect Canadian industries. Along with import taxes on various manufactures, a twenty per cent import tariff was placed on foreign paintings, drawings and prints. Frederick William Strange, a Conservative member of parliament for York North, Ontario, replied to opposition queries regarding the need for such a tax. Strange argued that without the tariff "the public would be led to infer that there were no native artists of any merit in Canada." In justice to the Ontario Society of Artists, Strange stated that he must protest against such an assumption since the Ontario Society of Artists held annual exhibitions in which paintings of "great merit" were exhibited. His remarks concluded with a statement that the tax should be levied in order to "protect the native product of art."<sup>20</sup> Such an argument indicates that the government viewed the Ontario Society of Artists as an effective

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<sup>19</sup>"Governor And Princess," Globe, 2 June 1883, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup>Debates of the House of Commons, 23 April 1879, p. 1473.

representative group.

There was a loophole in this tariff, however. Works of art by "artists of well-known merit" or copies of "old masters" were exempt from the tax on the grounds that they would "educate the people."<sup>21</sup> These exemptions were rather vague and it appears that various art dealers, always alert to their own interests, took full advantage of the tenuous phrases. In order to avoid the tax on imported works, the art dealers resorted to describing the majority of foreign painters as "well-known."

Once again, in 1883, it appears the artists were fed up with the competition from these "well-known" foreign works. In the preamble to a motion approved at their annual meeting the artists described the American dealers as utilizing the Canadian market as a "slaughter market" or, more familiarly, as a "dumping ground." The motion itself indicates that the artists viewed the tariff as a means of self-protection. The motion, duly reported in the Globe, read:

Whereas it has lately come to the knowledge of members of this society that certain picture dealers in the United States have made a slaughter market of Canada, and have exported to this city a large number of pictures which have been entered free of duty, it is resolved that the President be requested to communicate with the

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<sup>21</sup>Debates, p. 1473.

Minister of Customs calling his attention to the matter, so that the duty of twenty per cent may not by any artifice be evaded, and that some competent person may be appointed to assist the appraiser, and that action be taken to have the duty raised to at least forty per cent on pictures under \$1,000 and if over that value, and by well-known artists, ten per cent.<sup>22</sup>

The last statement is of particular interest. Since the majority of the works that the Canadians were offering for purchase was well below the one thousand dollar limit, it is obvious that the artists attempt to have the tariff raised to forty per cent was an attempt to curb the foreign competition.

Nor was this the only time the artists endeavoured to "protect" the native product. In 1889, the Society passed a motion requesting that the Executive Committee correspond with the Academy with a view to having an import tax placed on foreign art.<sup>23</sup> Again, in 1896, a deputation of artists called upon the Minister of Customs requesting that a duty be placed upon the "large number of trashy works" which were entering the country "under pretence that they were to be used for educational purposes."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>"The Artists," Globe, 1 June 1883, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup>Ontario Society of Artists, Minute Book, 5 Feb. 1889.

<sup>24</sup>"Artists Have Grievance," unidentified newspaper clipping, 19 Nov. 1896, contained in Ontario Society of Artists, Minute Book.

The problem of protection was one which was not solved during the years of this study. A glance at the Minutes of Ontario Society of Artists indicates the issue continued on into the twentieth century.

In 1899, a special meeting of the Ontario Society of Artists was called to discuss government protection for native art. Supporting "a measure of protection for native artists," C.M. Manly, a Toronto artist whose major works tended to be landscapes, argued that admitting the works of well-known artists free of duty was causing the "gradual destruction" of Canadian art. According to Manly, Canada was being used as a "dumping ground for the works of English and foreign artists that . . . have grown stale on the home market."<sup>25</sup> Although the majority of the artists agreed with Manly's contention, the Minutes recorded at least one dissenter.

E. Wyly Grier, a prominent Toronto portrait painter, opposed Manly's position. Grier argued that not only was there an educative value in foreign works, but that protection would create an antagonism to the artists on the part of the art dealers and private purchasers. Grier's was a minority voice, however; the majority of the artists favoured a specific protective tariff. Thus, the following motion was carried:

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<sup>25</sup> Ontario Society of Artists, Minute Book, 1 April 1899.

... that this society recommend that the duty at present in existence be changed to that of a specific duty not less than ten dollars and not more than twenty dollars on each painting except on those painted by non-resident Canadian artists.<sup>26</sup>

Again in 1906, the members of the Ontario Society of Artists wrote to Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier urging that a specific import tax be levied on all works of foreign art entering the country.<sup>27</sup> They also made deputations to the various governments urging the removal of the tariff on artists' supplies since this increased their costs and made it even more difficult for them to compete with the foreign market.<sup>28</sup>

Such actions were only sporadically successful as there were always counter interests pushing their views. Grier's opposition to the tariff had probably arisen from the fact that he was primarily a portrait painter whose clientele would be the more affluent members of society. It would be this group which was most inclined to purchase foreign works of art. Thus, while Grier was not likely to benefit from the tariff, even more important he could not afford to alienate his own market.

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<sup>26</sup>Minute Book, 1 April 1899.

<sup>27</sup>Letter to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 5 June 1903. Correspondence, Ontario Society of Artists, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>28</sup>Ontario Society of Artists, Minute Book, 10 Nov. 1896. Letter to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 5 June 1903.

Certainly, the interests of artists and art patrons did not always coincide. For example, the Montreal Art Association, a group dominated by art patrons, had on several occasions urged that the tariff be removed. They argued that "a high tariff . . . acts as a powerful deterrent to the infusion of . . . artistic spirit in any community."<sup>29</sup> Their stand was supported wholeheartedly by the Week's art critic, who argued that anyone who did not wish to see the tariff removed must have "the blindest and most willful ignorance of the needs of art life."<sup>30</sup>

It is evident that the Week's critic identified the "needs of art" with the needs of patrons, rather than artists. A similar attitude was displayed by Sara Jeannette Duncan in the Week. In an 1887 "Saunterings" column, Duncan isolated the artists' protectionist lobby as an example of Ontario Philistinism in action. One of the obstacles to a Canadian Renaissance, in her opinion, was the "undignified attitude" of the artists in "petitioning for a tax on foreign pictures."<sup>31</sup> Duncan seemed to be suggesting that the dignity of the arts required more lofty aspirations than merely

<sup>29</sup>"Art Notes," Week, 12 March 1885, p. 231. The 1883 Annual Report of the Art Association of Montreal also stated that the Council would continue the efforts of 1882 to have a remission of "duties on works of art of acknowledged merit." Annual Reports, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

<sup>30</sup>Week, 12 March 1885, p. 231.

<sup>31</sup>"Saunterings," Week, 20 Jan. 1887, p. 120.

advancing one's own interests. On the other hand, dealers and art patrons would be most likely to benefit from the removal of the tariff, and Duncan never did explain just how the tariff's removal would facilitate a Renaissance. Protests such as Duncan's indicate, however, that the Academy and the Society provided a means for the artists to make their collective presence felt.

In addition to providing a national forum for collective action, the Academy both provided further markets for the artists' work and enabled the public to judge what that fair market might be. Originally, it had been the Marquis of Lorne's intention that the Academy would, in turn, exhibit in the principal cities of the country.<sup>32</sup> However, poor sales resulting from exhibitions in the Maritimes soon prompted the artists to revise Lorne's intentions and, after 1882, exhibitions were confined to Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto.<sup>33</sup>

While the exhibitions provided a market for the artists, at the same time they gave the public an opportunity to judge the value of individual works in comparison with others entered in the same shows. Thus, both public and artists benefited from the inception of the Academy.

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<sup>32</sup>Records of the Founding of the Royal Canadian Academy, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup>"The Artists," Globe, 1 June 1883, p. 6.

Conversely, the Royal Society of Canada did not provide authors with a base for collective action or a viable marketplace. It also did not enable the public to judge the value of individual works by critical comparison with others placed in juxtaposition. Ironically, however, the Royal Society became synonymous with literature and was destined to be viewed by its critics as a protectionist association.

The formation of the Royal Society was touted as the final achievement of Confederation. In introducing the Bill of Incorporation in the House of Commons, Joseph Tassé, a former editor of La Minerve, Conservative Member of Parliament for Ottawa City, and a Charter Member of the Society, eloquently stated:

After having abolished the Customs House barriers between the Provinces, after having concluded a political union between them . . . it was desirable that this political federation should be crowned with an intellectual, a scientific and literary federation. It was . . . the crowning of the great structure erected by the statesmen whose genius accomplished the work of Confederation.<sup>34</sup>

Tassé's comments underline another difference in the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the two organizations. The Academy had developed from the nucleus of local art associations, and had had their support. The Society had no such base. Its impetus had come from the Governor General, the Marquis of

<sup>34</sup>Debates of the House of Commons, 19 March 1883, p. 263.



Lorne and a "few gentlemen designated by him" as a provisional council.<sup>35</sup>

The Royal Society was divided into four sections: French Literature, History and Archaeology; English Literature, History and Archaeology; the sciences of Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics; and Geology. The Society's principal object was to be the promotion of literary and scientific development in Canada.<sup>36</sup>

As we have seen, however, the original objections to the formation of the Royal Society resulted from a doubt as to the function it would serve. Commentators in the newspapers had argued that a literary society would be unable to improve either the standards of literary achievement or the attitude to literature held by the public.

An editorial in Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly not only reiterated such arguments, but it had concluded with a very practical query on the result of "incorporation." "Will it give to patriotism what it now gives to freebooting? Will it perceptibly favour Canadian publications over those that ~~hall~~ from abroad?"<sup>37</sup> Floun-

<sup>35</sup>"Report of the Provisional Council," Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, 1 (1882), ii.

<sup>36</sup>The Marquis of Lorne's Address, Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, 1 (1882), v.

<sup>37</sup>"The Proposed Canadian Academy of Letters," Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, 7 (July, 1881), 100.

dering financially, and unable to gain a larger share of the reading market, Rose-Belford's naturally preferred to see the establishment of an organization which would "protect" Canadian publications from the competitive effects of foreign magazines.

The Society's difficulties arose from a misconstruction of its aims. It actually functioned as a forum for the exchange of ideas. However, the Society was viewed as an elitist professional association designed to promote the interests of a small group of individuals. As we have seen, the original critical disapprobation had centred on the section devoted to English Literature. When Literature became only one of the four sections, criticism diminished, but only temporarily. As soon as financial support was proposed for the new Society objections again were raised.

In his incorporation speech, Joseph Tassé had hinted that the government would have to give financial aid to the Society if it was to accomplish its work.<sup>38</sup> Two months later, the federal budget included a five thousand dollar annual grant to provide for the publication of the Royal Society's proceedings. Sir John A. Macdonald had championed the need for the grant by pointing to examples of foreign governments who supported their intellectual societies. He further stated: "Everyone knows that philosophical

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<sup>38</sup>Debates of the House of Commons, 19 March 1883, p. 264.

transactions are not like popular novels; they are not generally interesting, and the publication of their transactions would not yield sufficient to pay for the cost of it."<sup>39</sup>

Such an admission was political dynamite. The Globe rose to the occasion. In an editorial entitled: "'Protecting' Literature," they argued that it was an "injustice to the people" that the government should offer to support the gratuitous distribution of the Society's publications.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, in speaking for the free trade interests in Parliament, the Honourable Edward Blake argued: "If you are going to tell the public they are not going to subscribe enough, but that you will take it out of their pockets by taxation . . . you will interfere with the interests, you will not advance the true progress of society." Blake stated that he would have more confidence in the Royal Society if they depended upon public subscription rather than appealing to the government for funds.<sup>41</sup>

Macdonald defended the Royal Society's request for funds with the thesis that the funds would enable the Society to serve the nation. He explained that the grant would enable the Society to publish their transactions. As these transactions would be dis-

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<sup>39</sup>Debates, 14 May 1883, p. 1195.

<sup>40</sup>"'Protecting' Literature," Globe, 19 May 1883, p. 9.

<sup>41</sup>Debates, 14 May 1883, p. 1195.

tributed in such diverse places as public libraries, the Royal Society would be helping to educate the public.<sup>42</sup>

Thus an annual grant was approved and, in the opinion of its critics, publication in the Transactions of the Royal Society became synonymous with failure to achieve publication elsewhere. Occasionally, Grip satirized these efforts at publication in various poems and quips. For example, a poem entitled "Preparing For the Royal Society" described the efforts of a member to dredge up a paper from his rejected manuscripts for the annual meeting of the Royal Society: "But now 'twill be printed at last when I've read it, / Though it brings in no money, 'twill add to my credit."<sup>43</sup> A similar attitude was displayed in the sketch "Everything Goes." A perplexed Canadian author, whose manuscript 'Characteristics of Canadian Literature' had been repeatedly rejected by the commercial publishers, was advised by a Friend to present it to the Royal Society: "Why you're a member of the Royal Society of Canada

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<sup>42</sup>Debates, 14 May 1883, p. 1196. Such political manoeuvrings have become transformed with time into an idealized state of affairs. In a history of the Royal Society published in 1932, the grant in question was referred to in these terms: "It is interesting to note that as early as 1883 the Dominion Government was so impressed with the value of the work of the Royal Society and the importance of its contributions to science and literature that it made a grant of \$5,000. for publication of its transaction." The Royal Society of Canada, Fifty Years In Retrospect 1882-1932 (Toronto: Ryerson, 1932), p. 3.

<sup>43</sup>Grip, 20 May 1891, p. 348.

ain't you? Read it to them and then it will be published among their Transactions without its costing you a cent."<sup>44</sup>

Grip's satire may not have been far off the mark, as letters to author William Kirby indicate. Kirby evidently had forwarded some of his "Idylls" to various editors in the hopes of having them accepted for their magazines. A letter from W.H. Withrow, editor of The Canadian Methodist Magazine expressed regret that he could not offer his magazine as a vehicle for the appearance of the poems. The letter continued: "Why not present them to the Royal Society. It would give them a prestige and yet not injure the sale...."<sup>45</sup>

Another letter from Graeme Mercer Adam, at various times a journalist, editor and publisher, commiserated with Kirby on the difficulty of publishing the collection. Adam questioned, "But is not this the legitimate work of the Royal Society, rather than sinking five thousand a year in the mammoth . . . Transactions which nobody sees or knows of...."<sup>46</sup> Such letters make it clear that there were mixed opinions on the function of the Royal Society and of the purpose to which its grant ought to be put. At least some felt the Society ought to be providing an outlet for their works, or at least a means of getting their works publicized.

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<sup>44</sup>Grip, 28 June 1890, p. 445.

<sup>45</sup>W.H. Withrow, letter to William Kirby, 9 March 1887. Correspondence with Publishers, Kirby Papers, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>46</sup>G.M. Adam, letter to William Kirby, 19 Aug. 1887. Correspondence with Publishers, Kirby Papers, Archives of Ontario.

The grant given to the Royal Society evidently was seen as a precedent by its sister organization, the Royal Canadian Academy. In 1883, a memorandum which set out the "Position and Claims of the Royal Canadian Academy" was attached to their annual Report for that year. Describing its formation as national and its functioning as "an agent of united action," the Academy claimed achievements in the field of culture parallel to those of the government in the field of politics. The Memorandum, remarkable for its use of words such as "union," "united action," "influence," "power," argued that the Royal Canadian Academy was three years older than the Royal Society and up to the present had relied solely on private funds for its functioning. Further, the grant to the Royal Society indicated the government had recognized the principle of cultural support. As the Academy's work was of greater "monetary value" to the country, the Academy was also requesting an annual grant of five thousand dollars. This sum, which the Academy regarded as being exceedingly small in proportion to their undertakings, was emphasized as being adequate only because of the "voluntary aid" in the cause of art from the individual artists themselves.<sup>47</sup>

The Toronto Daily Mail not only supported a grant for the Academy but suggested the amount should be doubled "as a states-

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<sup>47</sup>Memorandum, attached to Report of the Royal Canadian Academy, 1883.

men's protest against the spirit of philistinism which prevails among so large a class in this as in other countries." Suggesting that this sum could be justified as a means to improve public taste, the Mail noted that an amelioration of taste would indicate "a growing purity of life," in the meantime, a "growing capacity for art . . . indicates a growing faith."<sup>48</sup> The appeal to man's religious capacity was in many ways just another version of patriotism.

In contrast to the five thousand allocated to the Royal Society, Macdonald's government provided the Academy with only a twenty-five hundred dollar grant. Conversely, the Liberal opposition was more accommodating. When they learned that the Academy probably intended to use the grant to support an exhibition, they did not challenge the Academy's right to the funds.<sup>49</sup>

The Mail also felt that the Royal Society's grant was justified as a means to "mitigate the passionate worship of the god Mammon." The Mail, which had previously supported the government's grant to the Royal Society, later defended the Society as an institution which in the future would have a vast effect on national life. In an 1885 editorial, the Mail deplored the State's lack of support for Science, Literature and Art. Emphasizing that since

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<sup>48</sup>"The Academy of Arts," Editorial, Mail, 21 May 1883, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup>Debates of the House of Commons, 16 April 1883, p. 1607.

Confederation, Canadians had become an "especially practical people," the Mail continued: "We dig canals and build railways, and boom new provinces, and push more goods on the market and labour hard and think little, 'And never once possess our soul, Before we die.'"<sup>50</sup>

Significantly, the Mail's editorial appeared during the Northwest Rebellion—just two days after Poundmaker had surrendered to General Middleton. Had the Mail, who had criticized Macdonald's handling of the situation in the West, also decided the government was not doing enough to encourage cultural development? Certainly, the editorial agreed that the habit of talking economy encouraged politicians in the self-deception that the public were not interested in supporting the arts. According to the Mail, the expenses which would be least questioned by the public would be those devoted "... towards perfecting the organization and usefulness of such an institution as the Royal Society of Canada."<sup>51</sup>

With its inherent conservative position, the Mail felt that cultural institutions should be supported by the state, but their defence never convinced Goldwin Smith. An avowed free trader and disciple of the Manchester School, Smith continued to call the Society a "culpable luxury" and referred to their grant as a useless

<sup>50</sup>"The Royal Society," Editorial, Mail, 28 May 1885, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup>Mail, 28 May 1885, p. 4.



expenditure.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, the Globe denied the charge that not enough was being done to encourage art and literature. Even nine years after the initial grant had been given, the Globe argued that protection was not the panacea: "A paternal Government does its best to compel us to buy Canadian clothing, boots and sugar, and partially succeeds; but neither protection nor any other forcing process will do very much for giving us the finer products of the hands and the brain."<sup>53</sup>

Organizations with a view to promoting literature and art were an important aspect of the protective impulse in the cultural field. Another form can be seen in the continued agitation for copyright laws which would give preference to Canadian authors and Canadian publishers over British and American. The conflict arose from the provisions of the Imperial Copyright Act which prevented the Canadian government from passing any legislation which would contravene the British law. A largely unsuccessful battle lasting for over half a century, the copyright conflict was an important part of the protectionist debates of the century's last two decades.

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<sup>52</sup>Week, 1 May and 29 May 1884. Bystander, June, 1890, pp. 290-91.

<sup>53</sup>"A Canadian Poet," Editorial, Globe, 25 April 1891, p. 8.

According to the provisions of the Imperial Copyright Act, British imprints could not be republished in Canada. However, American reprints of British publications could be imported into Canada as long as a 12 1/2 per cent duty was paid as compensation for royalties. American authors also could be covered by the provisions of the Imperial Copyright Act if they established temporary residence in Canada and forwarded advance copies of the book in question to England. This would enable the book to be considered as having been first published in England thus effectively preventing republishing in Canada.

In 1875, Canada devised a Canadian Copyright Act, within the provisions of the Imperial Act, which made it more difficult for American authors to spend a few days in Canada in order to gain British copyright protection. The Canadian Act stated that an American author must both be domiciled in Canada (have a permanent residence) and have his books printed in Canada.

However, Canadian publishers were still at a disadvantage. Scandalously, a Canadian author published in Canada was not protected by the provisions of the Imperial Act if the production of the book was deemed inferior to those of British publishers. On the other hand, American publishers could reprint Canadian books without compensation to author or publisher.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>The foregoing material on the history of the copyright problem is based on H. Pearson Gundy, "Literary Publishing," in Literary History of Canada, 1, 188-202.


It did not take long for the copyright problem to appear on the agenda of the Royal Society. At the second annual meeting in 1883, William Kirby, an author who had personally suffered greatly from violations of copyright, in the pirated editions of his novel, The Golden Dog, traced this history of the copyright problem in a paper entitled "Canadian Literature and Copyright." Kirby argued that prior to the passage of the Imperial Copyright Act of 1842, literary activity had flourished in British North America. As a result of the Imperial legislation, Canadian authors and publishers had been stripped of protection and the book market had fallen into American hands.<sup>55</sup> Shortly after his paper had been publicly presented, Kirby wrote further on the subject to John A. Macdonald outlining the need for a copyright law "to restore that most ruined of all our industries—the publishing business in Canada—which alone the National Policy has done nothing for."<sup>56</sup> It was true that American publishers produced cheap reprints which flooded the Canadian market, and pirated editions of books were common.

The Week was vigorous in its discussion of copyright problems. In its first issue an article appeared on the subject by the

<sup>55</sup>MSS. William Kirby Papers, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>56</sup>William Kirby, letter to John A. Macdonald, 24 March 1885. Correspondence, Kirby Papers, Archives of Ontario. Ironically, Kirby's paper was never published in the Transactions and when he wrote to Macdonald, Kirby had to refer him to the copy of the text contained in the Quebec Chronicle.

journalist and writer, J.E. Collins. Titled "International Copyright," it described the dilemma of writers:



It is the trade of some to write books, and their livelihood is derived from the sale of their works. The publisher who, because, unforbidden by his nation's law, takes these books without making some recompense to their author is neither an honourable nor an honest man. It is about as just and as high-minded as if, instead of stealing books, he waited upon the quay till a ship laden with merchandise from an alien port cast anchor, and that then, fearing no molestation from his country's laws, he boarded that vessel, seized the cargo—which belonged to someone in the foreign country—and sold it over the land for his own profit.<sup>57</sup>

In another article titled: "Literature, Nationality and the Tariff,"

Graeme Mercer Adam wrote: "We are no advocates of Protection,

but if the principle is to be applied to other industries, why is book publishing exempt from its operation."<sup>58</sup> On another occasion, Adam

discussed the recently passed American Copyright Act and approvingly wrote: "Protection in some measure . . . has become a

necessity."<sup>59</sup>

The daily newspapers also discussed the copyright question at length and were sympathetic to the dilemma it represented.

<sup>57</sup>"International Copyright," Week, 6 Dec. 1883, pp. 5-6.

<sup>58</sup>"Literature, Nationality and the Tariff," Week, 27 Dec. 1889, pp. 59-60.

<sup>59</sup>"The Doom of Literary Communism," Week, 21 Feb. 1884, p. 183.

However, as the Mail noted, there was another dimension to the problem: "What Canadians and Americans, too, need to be assured of, is that they can continue to buy books at reasonable instead of fancy prices."<sup>60</sup> In an editorial bearing the heading "Downing Street Dictation of Copyright Law For Canada," the Globe discussed a proposed bill by the Canadian Copyright Association and suggested it would "give our publishers and booksellers the reprinting and handling of new British and foreign books on terms beneficial to authors and satisfactory to the Canadian public."<sup>61</sup>

Not everyone agreed with the need for copyright protection. The booksellers who profited from the sale of low-priced reprints were equally vociferous in their opposition to both copyright legislation and tariffs. This also must have been a problem for a newspaper like the Telegram which was in the business of reprinting themselves. The Globe and the Mail similarly occasionally offered various books as advertising promotion schemes, some of which at least would have been cheap reprints. The copyright problem thus involved a number of groups all with differing interests which, like the artists' protective tariff, weakened the effect of the authors' protests and helped to prevent the necessary legis-

<sup>60</sup>"Cheap Books And Dear Books," Mail, 2 Dec. 1881, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup>"Downing Street Dictation of Copyright Law For Canada," Globe, 5 Nov. 1888, p. 4.

lation from being enacted.

The copyright question was the literary equivalent to the artists' recurrent occupation with the tariff on foreign paintings. Both problems make it clear that, like other workers in the professions and trades, Canadian artists and writers were trapped by a highly competitive and materialistic society. It was imperative that they reduce that competition. As we have seen, one method was in the often futile attempt to protect the local market; another was in the move to reduce competition within their own ranks.

It is clear that one of the most pressing problems of both writers and artists was how to make a "living" from their profession. The Toronto Directory of 1886 offers some representative figures on the numbers engaged in various occupations and businesses in the city. For example, there were: 90 bakers, 20 banks with 83 bankers, 72 grocers, 84 insurance agents, 200 physicians, 120 builders, 80 boot and shoe dealers, and 139 boot and shoemakers. In the cultural area, 33 artists, 14 bookbinders, 48 booksellers and 64 periodical publications were listed.<sup>62</sup> In a society supposedly not devoted to the pursuit of the arts, these figures were remarkably high.

Painting seems to have been a profession which attracted all comers. The Globe claimed that the large number of people who

<sup>62</sup>Analysed by the Globe, 22 Jan. 1886, p. 3.

had taken up the profession, though lacking in any special aptitude or talent, had caused a glutted art market through overproduction.<sup>63</sup>

Writing in the short-lived magazine, Our Monthly, Wyly Grier, as a Toronto artist, not only agreed that the market was glutted, but he argued that the standards imposed for hanging at the annual exhibitions did not exclude mediocrity. Thus "inferior painters continued to starve on the borderland between failure and success." He suggested that raising the admission standards would "mercifully send them back to their legitimate work with the saw, the last and the harrow." Grier contended that low art standards instilled the belief that painting was a profession in which one could succeed "without an exacting apprenticeship, without extreme labour and without capital." Ultimately, Grier emphasized that better painting would bring "prosperity" to the artists.<sup>64</sup>

Admission to the Ontario Society of Artists was almost automatic in its early years, but in the 1880s and 1890s, applicants had to be both sponsored by members and they had to submit specimens of their work for evaluation. Notably the Minutes of the Ontario Society of Artists recorded numerous rejections from the 1880s onward. In the 1882 Annual Report, published in the

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<sup>63</sup>"Art in Toronto," Editorial, Globe, 15 Nov. 1894, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup>"Art Notes," Our Monthly, 1 (June, 1896).

Globe, the president stated that "a considerable number of applications had been received, but "more rigorous regulations governing the admission of candidates and the raising of standards lessened the increase." Evidently only one painter and one sculptor were added to the Society's rolls that year.<sup>65</sup>

Grier had suggested that raising the standards was a method of encouraging professionalism, but he also complained that the artists' self-respect was "jeopardized by processes such as working the press . . . and holding auction sales."<sup>66</sup> The auction sale was a common method of disposing of art works and a common method of purchase by prospective buyers. It was favoured extensively by dealers of foreign paintings and was also utilized by the artists themselves although perhaps with less enthusiasm.

Auction sales were very numerous: for example, in one six-week period in 1885, some four auction sales were advertised by various Toronto art dealers.<sup>67</sup> The Ontario Society of Artists itself held several auctions in order to dispose of the unsold work left at the end of various exhibitions. Prices realized at such sales tended to be much less than the prices listed in the exhibition

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<sup>65</sup>"Ontario Society of Artists," Globe, 18 May 1882, p. 8.

<sup>66</sup>"Art Notes," Our Monthly, 1 (June, 1896).

<sup>67</sup>Advertisements in Telegram, 10 and 11 April and 14 and 28 May, 1885.



catalogues. For example, several works by Frederick Bell-Smith, Marmaduke Matthews, and C.M. Manly were all listed at fifty dollars in the 1893 catalogue. However, the paintings were sold by auction and the artists grossed less than half the listed catalogue price.<sup>68</sup>

In 1888, George A. Reid, then an artist of 28, raised \$1360.05 from an auction sale of his work. This figure seems impressive at first glance; however, some 130 works in oil and watercolour were included in this sale, thus the average price would have been ten dollars a picture. Another sale held in 1892, produced an average of seventeen dollars a picture; and by this time Reid was a well-established artist with a considerable reputation in Toronto circles.<sup>69</sup>

There were exceptions, of course; a glance at Lucius O'Brien's studio book indicates that his pictures realized good prices. For example, O'Brien sold 7 paintings in 1888 for a total of \$1190, or an average of \$170 each. Again, in 1892, 15 paintings brought him a total of \$2015, or approximately an average of \$134 each. O'Brien's best prices seem to have come from Queen

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<sup>68</sup>Exhibition Catalogue 1893. Items 31, 92, 107, 202, 207 and 223 were all listed at fifty dollars. Sales prices were: No. 31 - \$18; 92 - \$18; 107 - \$13; 202 - \$16; 207 - \$19; 223 - \$21. Marked catalogue, Art Gallery of Ontario.

<sup>69</sup>G.A. Reid, Scrapbooks, Art Gallery of Ontario.

Victoria's two commissions in 1881 which totalled \$525. But O'Brien was an exceptionally popular artist at the time; and no doubt, Queen Victoria's commissions and his position as first president of the Academy, made him a favourite with Canadian art patrons.<sup>70</sup>

The conditions described by the Toronto Daily Mail in 1882 were more usual:

Reference to the Society's book would show that not one-fourth of the works exhibited find a sale at the exhibition, and the residue . . . must start on their travels in search of a market elsewhere. This is, as a commercial venture, a very bad one for the artists; and the pecuniary balance sheet may fairly be stated to be a loss. No tradesman would like the prospect of investing \$12,000 in a stock with the prospect of only realizing on \$3,000 in the course of the year's transactions, but that is what the artists have to do.<sup>71</sup>

In a city where competition was so keen, anyone who hoped to succeed had to market his product loudly. In this, the artists were similar to other workers. As J. Russell Harper has noted: "Artists sought to increase their personal prestige and promote sales by loudly advertising the various art societies in which they had membership, their celebrated teachers, and the gold

<sup>70</sup> Lucius O'Brien, Studio Journal, pp. 50-51 and p. 78.

<sup>71</sup> "Canadian Art," Mail, 3 June 1882, p. 16.

medals won at international exhibitions."<sup>72</sup>

More subtle, but very much in tune with the protectionist impulse was the manner in which the painters suggested they were offering the public both a service and an excellent investment. The introduction to a catalogue for an 1887 auction sale held in Toronto at Collican Company on behalf of T. Mower Martin makes this abundantly clear:

Mr. Martin is performing a public service in introducing the custom of disposing by auction of the original pictures by which an artist's reputation is formed . . . and he feels . . . [the public] . . . will find the pictures now offered to be a good and profitable investment, in addition to their value as a means of culture and ornament of those homes of taste for which our city is so justly celebrated.<sup>73</sup>

The artists were aided substantially in this public image by the newspapers. Journals continually harangued the public telling them it was a patriotic duty to purchase works by Canadian painters. The Telegram was being blunt when it stated: "It is more of a duty than a privilege for those who can afford it to encourage our native artists by buying their pictures." Just in case the patriotic argument was insufficient, the Telegram continued with a more material-

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<sup>72</sup> J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada, pp. 181-82.

<sup>73</sup> Extracts from catalogue reprinted in T. Mower Martin (Toronto: Jerrold Morris Gallery, 1969).

istic appeal: "Were it necessary to appeal to the selfish side of the public . . . it might be said that the early specimens of artists and schools have always proved buying investments."<sup>74</sup>

The Mail also utilized a similar argument. They castigated those who spent their money on "pictures by inferior foreign artists" rather than stimulating "native talent at lesser prices and greater renown."<sup>75</sup>

Patriotism was not viewed as merely an emotional ideal, for sentiment would not provide the painters with a livelihood. Rather, newspaper commentators regarded patriotism as an expression of that old adage: "put your money where your mouth is." Pointing to the rapid expansion of Ontario manufacturing, the Mail suggested that every commercial success should be "signalled" with the purchase of a Canadian painting.<sup>76</sup> Even if the public at large could not afford to buy paintings, they were not exempt from the functioning of the proverb. The public were told they owed a "duty" to the painters which could be fulfilled by paying their admission and viewing the exhibition.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup>"The Art Exhibition," Editorial, Telegram, 15 May 1879.

<sup>75</sup>"Women's Kingdom," Mail, 11 Feb. 1888, p. 5.

<sup>76</sup>"At the Exhibition," Mail, 9 Sept. 1882, p. 8.

<sup>77</sup>"In the Art Rooms," Mail, 20 June 1887, p. 5.

In spite of such press aid, however, the artists' lot was ultimately no different from that of many other workers. H. W. Charlesworth, a journalist who in later years would be remembered for his negative criticism of the Group of Seven, summed up the artist's dilemma. In an 1892 article entitled "Art in Canada Today" published in the short-lived Lake Magazine, he wrote as follows:

That the livelihood an artist obtains in Canada is somewhat precarious no one can deny; but that the artist's existence in Canada is a no more ungrateful and unpleasant one than any other walk in life is equally true. In a new and commercial country such as ours, the artist who earns butter for his bread must necessarily be something of a business man and a diplomat, and it is in this that many artists fail, and find bitterness in everything and everybody.<sup>78</sup>

It was necessary to be both a "business man" and a "diplomat." On the one hand this necessitated the formation of professional associations and closing ranks in an effort to capture the market. On the other, it meant convincing the public that the artists had a valuable product and that they were performing a service in offering this product (their paintings) to the public. While the artists were not always successful in this endeavour, neither were the workers in any of the other trades and professions. The point is, the artists did make concerted efforts to

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<sup>78</sup>"Art in Canada Today," Lake Magazine, 1 (Aug. 1892), 61.

protect their product and reduce competition. Further their efforts were supported by the newspapers.

If the artists' attempts to improve their prospects were not always successful, the efforts of those engaged in the literary field were even less so. However, the artists were more of a unified group than authors. They were professionals who belonged to societies with a common purpose. Those societies enabled them to act collectively and provided them with markets. None of these conditions was operative in the literary field in nineteenth-century Canada.

In the first place, while the majority of artists worked full time at their profession, most of those engaged in literary pursuits did not. For some, it was an avocation, but many felt they just could not earn enough to make literature a full-time occupation. Charles G.D. Roberts, one of the few Canadian poets ultimately able to exist solely from his writing, pointed this out in an 1882 letter to Archibald Lampman. Mentioning their mutual friend, J.E. Collins, Roberts stated that Collins "appears to be able to make a living wholly by his pen . . . but most of the rest of us of the literary guild must make literature only our staff, not our crutch. . . ." <sup>79</sup> Ten years later, in a contribution to the "Mermaid

<sup>79</sup>C.G.D. Roberts, letter to A. Lampman, 23 Sept. 1882. TS, M.O. Hammond Papers, Baldwin Room, Toronto Public Library.

Inn" column, William Wilfred Campbell lamented that "poetry of a class sponsored by Will Carleton is a paying product, but the best . . . verse is the least marketable."<sup>80</sup> Privately, Campbell wrote that only those who pandered to "vulgar taste" got published.<sup>81</sup>

In order to work as professionals, authors had to resort to the field of journalism, and they had to cater to the market. For the poets, in particular, this was a bitter pill.

While art societies could provide the artists with a marketplace in the annual exhibitions, there was no such equivalent for literature. Publishing opportunities were limited and books were often financed by the authors themselves or by subscription. The best market was the United States, but of course there Canadians were faced with the even greater competition from American authors. Nonetheless, it was a market to which many turned. As Goldwin Smith archly observed: "The breasts of some of our Canadian birds of song throng with patriotism, but on opening an American magazine you will find them, as least as soon as they are feathered, warbling on a foreign bough."<sup>82</sup> The Globe was not so condescending. While awaiting an Elizabethan age in Canada, it suggested that talented writers should not confine themselves to the small

<sup>80</sup>"At the Mermaid Inn," Globe, 21 May 1892, p. 8.

<sup>81</sup>W.W. Campbell, letter to W.D. Lighthall, 22 Dec. 1894, W.D. Lighthall Papers, McGill University.

<sup>82</sup>"What is the Matter with Canadian Literature?" Correspondence, Week, 31 Aug. 1894, pp. 950-51.

Canadian market "but should strike boldly into the larger fields. Great Britain and the United States . . . will give . . . an opportunity of access to a large body of readers."<sup>83</sup>

If the art dealers found it profitable to import American paintings to the Canadian market, book publishers found a lucrative trade in the republishing of American authors for the Canadian public. Painters found some protection in the tariff. The Canadian Copyright Act of 1875 provided no such consolation for authors. William Wilfred Campbell, perhaps the most vociferous of the poets, complained of "literary combines" and the development of large publishing houses which he lamented had "turned literature into a trade."<sup>84</sup> He refused to admit that publishing was a business, and the books of Canadian poets seldom made a profit.

It was obvious that the authors needed to work in concert to deal with some of their problems. But they lacked a clearly organized group of professionals who could act collectively.

The Royal Society, divided as it was into four diffuse sections, was not a unified group. Further, it encompassed only a fraction of the literary workers. And, while it seems to have provided a modicum of prestige for its members, as a collective

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<sup>83</sup>"A Canadian Poet," Editorial, Globe, 25 April 1891, p. 8.

<sup>84</sup>"At the Mermaid Inn," Globe, 4 Feb. 1893, p. 6.



means to promote literature it was a failure. Campbell confirmed this in another contribution to the *Mermaid Inn*. Commenting on the establishment of the American Writers Association in 1892, Campbell observed: "We have many writers and we have no association to bring them together. . . . Canadian writers would do well to band together on a practical basis. . . ." <sup>85</sup>

The first attempt to form an authors' association did not materialize until almost the end of that decade. In 1899, Bernard McEvoy, a newspaperman, together with G.W. Ross, Premier of Ontario, founded The Canadian Society of Authors. Notably, the first object of that group was to "promote the production of literature in Canada, and the interests of Canadian authors." Their first meeting also dealt with the copyright question. <sup>86</sup> Thus by the end of the century, authors were beginning to act in combination. However, during the sixteen years of this study, it was only through individual contacts and "booming" that writers, especially poets, were able to promote their works.

Lacking a professional association which set standards and restricted admission, Canadian authors were faced with unlimited

<sup>85</sup>In the same column Campbell also remarked: "The artists have their gatherings, and why should the literary folk not do likewise." *Globe*, 4 June 1892, p. 8.

<sup>86</sup>Bernard McEvoy, "The Canadian Society of Authors," *Canadian Magazine* 12 (April 1899), 561.

competition. Nonetheless, the protectionist rhetoric was still employed. Young writers were urged not to be content with merely seeing their effusions published, and were cautioned not to rush into print until their "work was worth paying for."<sup>87</sup> Similarly, authors who permitted their materials to be published without payment were accused of helping to keep "trashy" magazines in circulation. Thus by refusing to give their material away, poets and writers would be helping to raise the standards of publication.<sup>88</sup> Conversely, failure either to pay a "living wage" or to obtain one was equated with lowering the status of the profession.

A particular bone of contention against the cheap magazine itself was that it failed to make a "profit" out of the subscription price. Instead, such magazines relied on advertising for their revenue.<sup>89</sup> Consequently, the large circulation of the cheap magazine made it even more difficult for more expensive or "quality" magazines to compete with them. Of course, for the latter to succeed, it was only necessary to have "some measure of protection."<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup>W.W. Campbell, "At the Mermaid Inn," Globe, 23 April 1892, p. 8.

<sup>88</sup>"Woman's Kingdom," Mail and Empire, 16 May 1896, p. 5.

<sup>89</sup>Mail and Empire, 16 May 1896.

<sup>90</sup>G.M. Adam, "Literature In Canada," Letter, Globe, 1 March 1890, p. 6.

One other distinction between the two fields of endeavour should be remarked upon. There was a difference in the attitude to the role played by the author and the artist. In the late nineteenth century, Canadian art seems to have been accepted as the product of skilled technicians. For example, the comments in the Globe and by Wyly Grier on the low standards in the profession confirm this.<sup>91</sup> As a technician, a painter was entitled to expect a "living wage" for his labour. The equation was mathematical; the amount of labour expended upon a painting would determine the pecuniary reward the artist could expect. Of course, he did not always receive it, but the point is that society accepted the notion of fair return.

The attitude towards literary labour was quite different. The true author, as opposed to the journalist or popular hackwriter, was no mere skilled technician. He was endowed with quasi-divine attributes. Lampman's lines that the poet ought to have nothing to do with "gold," and Campbell's remarks that true poetry was not marketable are evidence of this attitude.<sup>92</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, who had felt that artists were "undignified" in advancing their

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<sup>91</sup>"Art in Toronto," Globe, 15 Nov. 1894, p. 4, and "Art Notes," Our Monthly, 1 (June, 1896).

<sup>92</sup>A. Lampman, "What do Poets Want With Gold?" Among the Millet, pp. 5-51. W.W. Campbell, "At the Mermaid Inn," Globe, 21 May 1892, p. 8.

interests, was far more critical of authors. She suggested that the literary work produced "solely by hope of gain" produced little "honour" for a country. Moreover, the true author had a divine mission which precluded thoughts of material gain:

While authorship is a profession with pecuniary rewards like any other, those who are truly called to it obey a law far higher than that of demand and supply. Genius has always worked in poverty and obscurity, but we never find it withdrawing from its divinely appointed labour. When the great litterateur recognizes himself, he will not pause to weight the possibilities of Canada's literary market before he writes the novel or poem that is to redeem our literary reputation.<sup>93</sup>

Her attitude seems to have been shared by other writers in the periodicals.<sup>94</sup>

The newspapers, on the other hand, argued that a great writer was not necessarily condemned to poverty and obscurity.

Indeed, the Globe suggested that the reverse was true:

Instead of publishers standing aloof, they are on the contrary alert to descry the faintest appearance of budding talent. . . . There may be a slowness in discerning gifts, but, once recognized, they are much in demand, and find a profitable market. The young

<sup>93</sup>"Saunterings," Week, 30 Sept. 1886, pp. 707-08.

<sup>94</sup>See: A.E. Wetherald, "Some Qualities of a Poet," Week, 10 Dec. 1885, pp. 20-21. G.M. Adam, "An Interregnum in Literature," Week, 12 June 1884, pp. 409-99. A.J. Stringer, "To Canadian Poets," Canadian Magazine, 1 (June 1893), 317.

man who feels that he is touched with the divine fire must bide his time slowly and patiently fanning it into such a flame that at length the whole world may be illumined by it.<sup>95</sup>

Nonetheless, there seems to have been a lurking suspicion in the minds of authors and reinforced by the periodicals that active efforts to "protect" the literary product indicated that the author was not "truly called." In turn, this would have resulted in a somewhat ambivalent attitude on the part of writers to the whole problem of protection. On the one hand, protection was a patriotic function since it would enable the tender plant of Canadian literature to grow. On the other hand, concerted efforts at combination would weaken the resultant product.

Ultimately, it seems that the protectionist impulse provided a stimulus for the artists. It enabled them to offset some of the most debilitating aspects of competition and to work collectively towards the realization of some of their goals. In contrast, while the impulse existed in the literary field, literary aspirants were never able to combine effectively for self-protection. Further, their own view of the creative role made it difficult for them to wholeheartedly support protection itself. The establishment of the English Literature section of the Royal Society seems to have been

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<sup>95</sup>"The Literary Calling," Editorial, Globe, 6 Feb. 1893, p. 4.

a deterrent in that the means for collective action which it appeared to provide actually never materialized.

In the long run, the Royal Society may have actually hindered the development of Canadian literature. It precipitated a flood of literary criticism in defence of its existence. Articles such as "Have We a Canadian Literature?", "The Need of a Canadian Literature," and the "Progress of Canadian Literature" were the staple of this criticism. Instead of getting on with the business of writing, or even with attempting to professionalize their craft, too many authors were devoting their talents to literary appraisals. As Grip so aptly put it: "Everybody knows, it was writing about English literature, the necessity of having it, and the means of encouraging it [sic] that it got a start."<sup>96</sup>

Certainly, the question of cultural protection was not solved in the nineteenth century. The necessity for protection in order for Canadian culture to develop is still extremely relevant. Interestingly, the argument has not changed much. Witness the comments in a 1981 number of Saturday Night where a letter to the editor claims that protection is necessary so that Canada will not face "cultural asphyxiation" at the hands of the United States.

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<sup>96</sup> "How to Become a Native Litterateur," Grip, 16 April 1889, p. 213.

I see our culture as a young seedling. If it can be protected from some aspects of the environment, it may well develop into something strong and self-sufficient. But that initial protection is needed. Otherwise, our culture will just not receive a reasonable opportunity to blossom.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Letter to the Editor responding to article by Robert Fulford on "Confronting the Cultural Crisis," Saturday Night 96 (Feb. 1981), 5-6. Stephen H. Gerring, Letter. Saturday Night 96 (April 1981), p. 5.

## CHAPTER IV

### OF MAKING BOOKS THERE IS NO END: LITERARY CONTENT AND ATTITUDES OF THE DAILIES

Hitherto English literature in Canada has been cultivated by so scanty a population, scattered at great distances over so vast a country, that it has not been a matter of any great public interest whether our native writers produced good work or bad. Consequently anything like an efficient critical press has been out of the question. Certainly those occasional writers in the daily papers, who greet every new production of whatever merit or demerit with the same ridiculous praises decked out in the same fulsome and meaningless phraseology, have the least claim possible to be considered critics. Of late years we have had to depend solely upon The Week. . . .

Archibald Lampman,  
"At the Mermaid Inn."<sup>1</sup>

The range of literary material carried by Toronto newspapers in the years 1880-1896 was very broad. All the dailies carried serialized fiction, short stories and poetry. Reviews of new publications were regularly featured by the three larger sized journals (Globe, Mail, Empire) and occasionally, by the smaller ones (News, Telegram, World). In addition, critical articles and biographical sketches of various literary personalities appeared

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<sup>1</sup>"At the Mermaid Inn," Globe, 19 March 1892, pp. 8-9.



periodically. Contemporary and past British, European and American writers were familiar figures within the pages of Toronto newspapers. As Canadian authors increasingly began to publish, they too were allotted space within the dailies. To sample this rich material is in some small measure to gain an insight into the literary attitudes of the general readership of these journals.

In surveying this material, some reference will be made to Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, the Week, and the Canadian. It has been argued that these periodicals offer the best index to cultured taste in the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Thus, a comparison of material published in the dailies with similar matter in the periodicals will provide a basis for an evaluation of the extent and intellectual level of the former.

Nineteenth-century Canadian critics condemned the newspaper press for its failure to support the development of Canadian literature. Writers like Sara Jeannette Duncan emphasized that newspapers not only ignored the established fields of world literature, but that they especially overlooked the growing publication of Canadian work:

Our . . . daily journals have no space for book reviews except at so much per agate line; and have too much to do in 'encouraging' the industries to pay much attention to

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<sup>2</sup>Bissell, pp. 237-38.

the arts. Commercial, agricultural, and sporting editors abound, but the literary editor is an unknown quantity, to be represented by x. . . . Conversationally we carefully follow the example set us by the newspapers, and ignore the native-born person who has had the audacity to make a votive offering to the divinities and the temerity to print it.<sup>3</sup>

Duncan indicated that there was a reciprocal relationship between the newspapers and the people: the newspapers provided a poor example to the public in not promoting Canadian literature, while the public's defective taste was responsible for the lack of a demand for such literary content within the newspapers.<sup>4</sup>

Other writers pointed to a lack of critical standards on the part of reviewers as an obstacle preventing the development of Canadian literature:

Until such time as criticisms are written by capable men who have read the books they review not simply glanced at the title pages, and with a view to give a correct idea of the merit of the work, and not as a mere book-seller's advertisement, book reviews will be as reliable as patent medicine advertisements, and probably as fostering to good literature.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>"Saunterings," Week, 13 Jan. 1887, pp. 111-12. G.M. Adam similarly protested "against the cheap attitude of an essentially ignoble journalism which has not a single good word to say for the native author or his work." See: "National Literature and the Scoffing Spirit," Week, 5 Jan. 1888, pp. 85-86.

<sup>4</sup>"Saunterings," Week, 30 Sept. 1886, pp. 707-08.

<sup>5</sup>J. E. Logan (Barry Dane), "National Literature," Week, 4 Sept. 1884, pp. 632-33.

In part, such criticisms were true. It appears that Toronto newspapers did not have special literary editors, and some reviews make it clear that certain books had been very hastily perused.

However, it was not true that Toronto newspapers completely "ignored" Canadian literary productions and, if critical standards were lacking in the newspapers, it was not totally due to the ineptitude of local journalists. For in the larger and more developed literary communities of America and Britain, canons of criticism were conspicuously lacking in the periodical press.<sup>1</sup> Attitudes to the place and role of criticism within the periodical and daily press were often contradictory.

Byron's lines on the death of John Keats characterize the malicious nature of much periodical criticism practised in England in the early nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Reviews, usually anonymous, often carried a personal element of private abuse and private hostility. By the middle of the century, British reviews tended to be more of a display of the critic's own erudition than a vehicle of information. Conversely, American reviews became increasingly characterized by excessive praise.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>"Who Killed John Keats?" The first verse of his poem served as the epigram to Chapter II. Byron's lines were in reference to the contemporaneous belief that the vitriolic attack on Keats's poem "Endymion" published in the Quarterly Review hastened his death.

<sup>7</sup>Salmon, pp. 294-304.

Regular newspaper reviews were a fairly late development of the nineteenth century. According to Edmund Downey, a noted British author and former editor of the Waterford News, as late as the 1880s, editors of the great British dailies "thought themselves fairly generous if they gave a column or two a week to notices of current literature." Downey suggested that journalists themselves considered the whole job of reviewing as "the last infirmity of the noble mind."<sup>8</sup>

The terms "criticism" and "review" seem to have been used interchangeably. There is, however, a distinction to be made between them. A review tends to be an introduction to the book; it may summarize or excerpt the book and offer short comments on its merits. In effect, the review is a type of prophecy which may or may not be confirmed by history. In contrast, literary criticism, assuming the reader's prior familiarity with the book, attempts detailed analysis and judgements. As a forum limited by the pressure of daily deadlines, the newspaper was and remains a better vehicle for the review than for extended criticism. The latter is more usually found in the less pressured timetable of the periodical.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Quoted in Salmon, p. 293.

<sup>9</sup>Salmon, p. 306.

At the same time that Canadian critics were admonishing the journals for their lack of reviews, or their hasty treatment in such reviews, they also tended to deprecate a tendency to over-generous praise:

Little discrimination is shown in criticism. Flattering and fulsome praise is so recklessly bestowed upon very common-place people and their works, that when some person or thing far above the average appears, the journalistic vocabulary of laudatory phrases is already exhausted, and merit receives no adequate reward.<sup>10</sup>

Such praise was often suggested as resulting from a misguided desire to promote Canada's fledgling native literature. Again, this was true in part. However, the tendency to generosity was not a phenomenon limited to Canadian reviewers. Reacting to the over-severity of the earlier part of the century, many late nineteenth-century reviewers of British and American journals felt that it was their duty to be good-natured and reflect catholic tastes as a recognition that books are written to many standards.<sup>11</sup> On the whole, however, as we shall see, over-generous praise was not a characteristic of newspaper reviews.

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<sup>10</sup>J.E. Logan, p. 632.

<sup>11</sup>Salmon, pp. 311-12. See also: E.S. Nadal, "Newspaper Literary Criticism," Essays at Home and Elsewhere (London: Macmillan, 1883), pp. 262-63.

New publications were mentioned in the newspapers under a variety of headings: Book Notices; Current Books; Book Table; Literature of the Day; and (with the explosion of writing in the 1890s) under the heading "Of Making Books There Is No End." Some notices were merely announcements of publication. Others were descriptive reviews with large extracts from the book in question. A few attempted some evaluation of the author's achievements.

Every type of book was reviewed, although books dealing with aspects of history, religion and science probably encompassed the bulk of the review space. As a random example, titles of books reviewed in the Globe on September 21, 1895 included: Henry Rutgers Marshal, Aesthetic Principles; William S. Case, Forward House, A Romance; Ella MacMahon, A Modern Man; Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet; Henry M. Field, Our Western Archipelago; Henry Arthur Jones, The Renaissance and the English Drama; Rev. H.T. Crossley, Practical Talks On Important Themes; J.S. Black, The Christian Consciousness; and William DeWitt Hyde, Outlines of Social Theology. Six of the titles listed Toronto as the republishing centre. As an added filip, this same column also reproduced a lyric by the Canadian poet Bliss Carman, which had appeared in Munsey's Magazine that month.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>"'Aesthetic Principles' And Other Books," Reviews, Globe, 21 Sept. 1895, p. 11.

Books dealing with Canadian topics such as history or development, resources and patriotism received respectful attention in the columns of the newspapers. For example, in 1893 G.M. Ross, Ontario Minister of Education, compiled a school text entitled Patriotic Selections and Arbor Day Exercises. The Telegram, which rarely published reviews, devoted almost a complete column to the book. The article's heading is indicative of the attitude taken to the work: "GOOD WORK BY G. M. ROSS/An Aid to Patriotism/A School Book That Really Fills A Long Felt Want and Teaches a True But Broad Patriotism."<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, the various histories which proliferated throughout the 1880s and 1890s were all carefully reviewed. Again, every installment of Picturesque Canada was enthusiastically announced by the various papers.

In the field of belles lettres, publications by British and American writers were noted at length. Some of these reviews were accorded to authors who were popular at the time, but whose reputation has since faded. New books by American writers such as Bret Harte, James Whittcomb Riley and Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and by British authors such as J.M. Barrie, Marie Corelli and Rider Haggard were reviewed regularly. Other authors whose

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<sup>13</sup>"Good Work by G.M. Ross," Telegram, 14 Nov. 1893, p. 3.

reputations have perhaps increased with time were equally prominent in the review columns. Realists like Howells, James and Zola received serious if perhaps at times bewildered attention. Translations of the works of authors such as Henrik Ibsen and Leo Tolstoy were accorded space. Finally, there were reviews of works of many authors listed in standard anthologies today, such as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, William Makepeace Thackeray, Mark Twain, Robert Burns.

Although any number of articles could serve as examples of the manner in which foreign authors were reviewed in Toronto newspapers of the period 1880-1896, I have chosen two novels which caused a stir on both sides of the Atlantic, Looking Backward and Robert Elsmere. These works were a variety of didactic fiction which became prominent in response to the social dislocation that became increasingly more evident between 1880 and 1920. Both books were reviewed at length in the Toronto newspapers. Interestingly, neither seems to have been mentioned in the Week.<sup>14</sup>

Looking Backward (1887) by the American writer Edward Bellamy is a utopia in which the hero, Julian West, a nineteenth-century Bostonian wakes up one morning to find that he is living one hundred years in the future.<sup>15</sup> It is a future where poverty

<sup>14</sup>D. M. R. Bentley, A Checklist of Literary Materials in The Week (Ottawa: The Golden Dog Press, 1978).

<sup>15</sup>Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward (1887, N.Y.: Random House, 1951).



and unequal opportunity have been erased, to be replaced by a true democracy in which all share equally. A two and a half column review in the Globe summarized the book and outlined the type of civilization Bellamy portrayed. It pointed out that the book's main interest lay not in the love story but in the series of conversations that Julian West has with Dr. Leete, and in the excursions West, Leete and his daughter make to examine the "wonderful institutions" of twentieth-century Boston. The Globe suggested that an author who could introduce the reader to a new order of things should be "hailed as a literary, possibly a moral benefactor." According to their estimate, Bellamy had at least partially achieved such an honour.<sup>16</sup>

Robert Elsmere (1888) by British novelist Mary Humphrey Ward is the study of a young minister who loses his faith.<sup>17</sup> He renounces the church to do social work in the London slums and eventually starts his own brotherhood. In Britain, the book received a mixed critical reception.<sup>18</sup> In Toronto, the novel was denounced from the pulpit.<sup>19</sup> A short article in the Globe, however, described the book as "one of the strongest novels published

<sup>16</sup>"Literary Notes," rev. of Looking Backward, Globe, 26 July 1889, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup>Mary Humphrey Ward, Robert Elsmere (1888, N.Y.: Garland Publishing, 1976).

<sup>18</sup>Introduction, Clyde de Ryals, ed., Robert Elsmere (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), xxii-xxiv.

<sup>19</sup>See: "Robert Elsmere/Rev. Prof. Clark on Mrs. Ward's Novel," Globe, 12 Nov. 1888, p. 2.

since George Eliot's death." The reviewer noted that the book's vogue was due not merely to the fact that the British Prime Minister Gladstone had published a critique of it, but because of the "power" with which it illustrated "the wrestlings of many noble minds with the spiritual problems of the time."<sup>20</sup>

At their best, such reviews opened a new world to Toronto readers. At their worst, the novelist's intentions were twisted to reflect the reviewer's preconceived opinions. For example, a long review of A Doll's House posed the question: "did Nora go back?" And answered it in the affirmative. The reviewer argued that Ibsen was not trying to advocate a new social order. Rather, he was simply an "excellent dramatist" portraying aspects of life.<sup>21</sup>

Canadian books comprised a small percentage of the notices, and works of belles-lettres an even smaller fraction, although it is probable that the notices reflected the actual publication production, but a fraction which increased as the number of publications multiplied. By the 1890s, the increasing attention paid to such works becomes reflected in a new heading for the book review column: "Literary Notes/Short Comments on Recent Publications in Canada

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<sup>20</sup>"Literary Notes," rev. of Robert Elsmere, Globe, 27 July 1888, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>"Literary Notes," rev. of A Doll's House, Globe, 26 April 1890, p. 8.

and elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> Canada, rather than a foreign centre, was seen as the focal point.

Although we can do little more than tentatively explore the range of notices accorded to Canadian authors of fiction and poetry, it should not be forgotten that this is a sampling of the total reviews. Between 1880 and 1896, more than eighty Canadian authors were reviewed in the daily newspapers. A glance at their names confirms that the majority of authors publishing during the period were included in these reviews: Grant Allen; Rev. Duncan Anderson; A.M. Ardaugh; Robert Barr; Jean Blewett; J.W. Bengough; Helen Boggs; John Campbell (Cawdor Bell); R. McLean Calder; G.F. Cameron; Amos Chandler; J.E. Caldwell; W.F. Campbell; Bliss Carman; Mrs. W.N. Clarke; J.E. Collins; Janet Conger; H.K. Cockin; I.V. Crawford; Mrs. John Crawford; N.F. Davin; J.C. Dent; Lilly Dougall; Hunter Duvar; S.J. Duncan; Charles Dwight; J.D. Edgar; Joshua Fraser; Watson Griffin (Twox); P.S. Hamilton; Frances Harrison; L.S. Huntington; John Imrie; E. Pauline Johnson; T.S. Jarvis; William Kirby; Archibald Lampman; W.H. Leavitt; W.D. Lighthall; S. Livingston; Evan MacColl; Donald McCaig; A. McLachlan; D'Arcy McGee; K.S. McLean; James McIntyre; W.P. McKenzie; William McLennan; A.M. Machar;

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<sup>22</sup>"Literary Notes," Globe, 3 Oct. 1890, p. 2.

Charles Mair; George Martin; George E. Merkley; Mary Morgan;  
 Rev. Cornelius O'Brien; Maude Ogilvy; Thomas O'Hagan; James  
 Oxley; Christopher Oakes; Gilbert Parker; C.G.D. Roberts;  
 Margaret Marshall Saunders; E.E. Sheppard; Rev. W.W. Smith;  
 Duncan Campbell Scott; Frederick George Scott; A.G. Sevigny;  
 Robert Sellar; A.C. Stewart; Arthur J. Stringer; E.W. Thomson;  
 C.P. Traill; Frank Walters; A.E. Wetherald; J.E. Wetherall;  
 Arthur Weir; W.H. Withrow; Joanna Wood.

Many of these authors published more than one book, and  
 thus were reviewed on several occasions. Certain books such as  
The Seats of the Mighty received multiple notices in individual  
 newspapers.

While reviews of Canadian fiction were rare in the 1880s,  
 this was as much from a dearth of available works as from any  
 unwillingness on the part of newspapers to notice such material.  
 Writing of Canadian literary achievements in 1883, J.E. Collins  
 remarked that Canadian fiction makes a "wretched exhibit."<sup>23</sup> More  
 recently, Gordon Roper mentions in the Literary History of Canada  
 (1976) that there were very few professional fiction writers in the  
 early 1880s. He suggests that from the year 1888 the situation  
 began to alter. According to Roper, some fifty Canadian fiction

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<sup>23</sup>"English-Canadian Literature," Week, 28 Aug. 1884,  
 pp. 614-15.

writers established themselves between the years 1888-1914.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, in Canada And Its Provinces, T.G. Marquis described the year 1890 as a watershed period in the development of Canadian fiction: "It would be quite within the mark to take the definite year 1890 as the dividing line between the early writers, more or less provincial in their art and the modern school influenced by world standards."<sup>25</sup> In the first half of the sixteen-year period of this study therefore, reviewers had few opportunities to discuss Canadian fiction. After 1890, however, writers such as S.J. Duncan, Gilbert Parker and E.W. Thomson were greeted enthusiastically.

Of the scattered publications of the 1880s, reviews tendered novels published by L.S. Huntington and E.E. Sheppard were typical of the newspaper response to Canadian fiction. Lucius Seth Huntington (1827-1886), the politician who raised the corruption charges against Macdonald's government in connection with the Pacific Railway charter, was postmaster general in the ensuing Mackenzie government. His one fictional effort, Professor Conant. A Story of English and American Social and Political Life, was published in 1884 by the Toronto firm of Rose. A contemporary story, the setting moves between England, Canada and the eastern United

<sup>24</sup>"New Forces: New Fiction 1880-1920," in Literary History of Canada, 1, 275.

<sup>25</sup>"English Canadian Literature," Canada and Its Provinces 1913-1917, article rpt. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

States. Shipboard romances and disasters at sea unite a large group of characters from the three countries. Some people such as the Governor-General are only thinly disguised from their real counterparts. The portrait of the title character, Professor Conant, seems heavily based on Goldwin Smith. Social and political concerns, particularly the questions of democracy and religious freedom, are the underlying themes of the book.<sup>26</sup>

Huntington's novel received a long review in the World which emphasized the importance the novel had for Canadians. Discussing the "Pan-Anglican" aspects of the novel, the writer admitted that he was not certain whether speeches by certain characters in the novel indicated that Huntington favoured annexation or not. However, the writer preferred to take the view that there was both "room for three systems and yet for the friendliest of relations" among the three countries. While the novel had no single hero, the World singled out a young French Canadian named DeLuynes for special notice: "His history is a sad one. Moreover it is all the sadder because it is true to life. It is of a young French Canadian whose life and ambition have been blighted because he would not submit to priestly control in politics." Quoting excerpts from the book in which Huntington had DeLuynes describe the failings of French

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<sup>26</sup>L. S. Huntington, Professor Conant (Toronto: Rose, 1884).

Canadians, the writer indicated that the book's moral suggested Canada would remain a union of the English-speaking people and that both the United States and Canada should control the spirit of intolerance that was becoming entrenched along the St. Lawrence.<sup>27</sup>

The book apparently was not reviewed in the Week and it was dismissed by J.E. Collins in his review of Canadian literature.<sup>28</sup> Today, the novel is mentioned briefly in the Literary History of Canada as a social comedy of international manners which is unfavourably compared to Duncan's works.<sup>29</sup> In their review of the novel, however, the World perhaps more sagely concluded:

The book has many structural faults, full of padding, weak in conversational power; it often shows a want of full acquaintance with the various phases of social life that it attempts to portray; but we can pass over these for the importance of its material to us as Canadians. It deals with a Canadian problem; and it is by a man who ought to know something of what he professes to speak.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>"L. S. Huntington's Novel," rev. of Professor Conant, World, 2 June 1884.

<sup>28</sup>"English Canadian Literature," Week, 28 Aug. 1884, pp. 614-15.

<sup>29</sup>Gordon Roper, Rupert Schieder and S. Ross Beharriell, "The Kinds of Fiction 1880-1920," Literary History of Canada, I, 323.

<sup>30</sup>World, 2 June 1884.

In contrast to the long, detailed review of Huntington's novel, E.E. Sheppard's work Dolly, The Young Widder Up To Felder's, received a short but succinct notice in the Globe.<sup>31</sup> The article, which is typical of the shorter newspaper reviews, stated in part:

It contains a good backbone, and in this respect contrasts favorably with many productions in these days miscalled stories. Some of its characters appear to have been drawn from life, and these are very amusingly and skilfully portrayed. Others, among them the hero and heroine, are not natural, neither are they pleasant. Nearly all of the characters talk in a dialect which certainly belongs to no part of Canada with which we are acquainted, and we are sure there is not in the country any village the inhabitants of which can be said to be truly represented in this book. Canadian villagers are certainly not as a rule vicious, quarrelsome, or slanderous. They are not prone to gambling, murder, adultery, or [illegible] against orthodoxy. Of course, if Mr. Sheppard did not intend his characters to be representative, such remarks as these are entirely out of the way. The book, as a whole, is decidedly clever and it gives good reason for the belief that this author may make his mark in Canadian literature.<sup>32</sup>

To anyone unfamiliar with the novel, the Globe's comments might seem gratuitous. However, a reading of the work indicates

<sup>31</sup>E.E. Sheppard, Dolly, The Young Widder Up To Felder's (Toronto: Rose, 1886). The novel also ran as a serial in the News during 1886.

<sup>32</sup>"Literary Notes," rev. of Dolly, Globe, 3 Sept. 1886, p. 2.



that the reviewer has shrewdly assessed both the strong and weak points of Dolly. The novel's plot is fast moving and full of suspense. Set in a fictional Ontario town, the story revolves around the fortunes of a young village belle named Dolly who marries a stranger from the city. Jealousy and misunderstandings provide the motivation for mysterious disappearances, infidelity, licentiousness and death. While Dolly's father is skilfully portrayed as a free thinking philosopher, both she and her husband lack verisimilitude. The dialect attributed to Dolly's mother also seems to be out of place in smalltown Ontario. Moreover, the malicious character of the villagers is somewhat overdone. Yet, as the Globe concluded, in spite of these defects, the novel has an absorbing story and is "decidedly clever."<sup>33</sup>

From the thin showing of the 1880s, we turn to the next decade. Reviews of E.W. Thomson's first publication, Old Man Savarin, and Other Stories (1895) and Gilbert Parker's eleventh book, The Seats of the Mighty (1896) offer a glimpse into the manner in which such works were reviewed in Toronto newspapers.

E.W. Thomson's collection of stories received two reviews from both the Globe and its new competitor, the amalgamated Mail and Empire.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps Thomson's reputation as a Toronto journal-

<sup>33</sup>Globe, 3 Sept. 1886, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup>E.W. Thomson, Old Man Savarin and Other Stories (Toronto: Briggs, 1895).

ist may have been responsible for the number of reviews his work received. The local colour and optimistic view of life contained in the collection, however, were a pivotal factor for the enthusiasm in these notices.

The Globe reviewed Old Man Savarin and Other Stories in both the literary and editorial sections of the paper. Their reviews suggested that Thomson's stories marked the appearance of a prose writer who could delineate both the distinctive features of Canadian nature and couple them with strong human interest:

The reader is in the lumber woods, or on the swift, brown waters of the Ottawa, but he is there with men, women and children living homely lives, 'toiling, sorrowing, rejoicing'; hungering because the lumbering business is dull or the fish will not bite, lifted into joy and prosperity by the breaking up of a raft, bringing a reward for the rescued deals.<sup>35</sup>

According to the reviewer, the stories were "full of life." Thomson's style was described as "clean and incisive," his characterization vigorous, and his inventive faculty "rare."<sup>36</sup> "The Privilege of the Limits" and "The Shining Cross of Rigaud" were stories mentioned by the Globe as exhibiting Thomson's deftness

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<sup>35</sup>"Canadian Stories," Editorial review of Old Man Savarin and Other Stories, Globe, 21 Sept. 1895, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup>"Books and Authors: Old Man Savarin and Other Stories," rev. Globe, 16 Nov. 1895, p. 11.

with both humour and pathos. It was also stated that his stories of "habitants" were breaking new ground in fiction. According to the writer, Thomson's stories were excellent examples of the off-hand story genre.<sup>37</sup>

The Mail and Empire similarly praised Thomson's achievement. This reviewer was particularly impressed with Thomson's ability to portray character traits: the ready wit and strong arm of Madame Paradis, the child-like faith and endurance of Little Baptiste, the characteristic canny old Scot and the pig-headed obstinacy of the big Irish lumberman. Thomson's ability to individualize types in a few words was emphasized. Noting the "love of truth," and "tender sympathy" of each page of the collection, the Mail and Empire concluded: "We, as Canadians, are proud to claim the author as . . . one of ourselves, one who has . . . added one noble brick to the structure of Canadian literature."<sup>38</sup>

Thomson's collection was also reviewed in the Week by his friend, the Ottawa poet, Archibald Lampman. His review described the stories as "genuine" and told with "delightful skill." Thomson's skilful use of imagery, simple diction and dialect indicated that the book revealed the author was a "student of Canadian life." Ironi-

<sup>37</sup>Globe, 21 Sept. 1895, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup>"New Publications: Old Man Savarin and Other Stories by E. W. Thomson," rev. Mail and Empire, 21 Sept. 1895, p. 7.

cally, however, Lampman mentioned three stories dealing with the American civil war as "among the most effective in the book."<sup>39</sup>

Lampman's conclusion indicates that his critical judgements are not quite as perceptive as those of the anonymous newspaper reviewers. In placing the final emphasis on the civil war stories, Lampman somewhat downplays the importance of the local colour stories—the stories which had been the focal point of the newspaper reviews. Moreover, the overt didacticism of the civil war stories prevents them from achieving the unity of effect found in such stories as "The Privilege of the Limits" and "McGrath's Bad Night." In other respects, the three reviews are comparable.

There are greater divergencies apparent in the respective reviews of Gilbert Parker's The Seats of the Mighty.<sup>40</sup> The Week's review described the romance as the work of a "mature artist" and as a "magnificent" story.<sup>41</sup> Conversely, the Globe described the book as heavily flawed and argued that to call it a "great book would be misleading and beside the truth."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>"Old Man Savarin and Other Stories," rev. Week, 9 Aug. 1895, pp. 880-81.

<sup>40</sup>The Seats of the Mighty (London: Methuen, 1896).

<sup>41</sup>T. G. Marquis, "The Seats of the Mighty," rev. Week, 29 May 1896, pp. 643-44.

<sup>42</sup>"The Seats of the Mighty," Editorial rev., Globe, 9 May 1896, p. 16.

T. G. Marquis (1864-1936), a school teacher, author and journalist, perhaps best known for his chapter "English-Canadian Literature" in Canada and Its Provinces, wrote the review of The Seats of the Mighty for the Week. It is a high encomium. Parker's style was described as "poetic" and the forcefulness of his reflections on life were equated with the Elizabethan dramatists. Marquis argued that unlike most romances, where the characters tended to be shadowy outlines, Parker's were "fine portraits" and "subtle psychological studies."

While Parker "portrays with a rapid, broad touch, he is careful to give here and there a sentence of detail which gives us the key to the character." Moray was "noble"; Doltaire was of "heroic mould"; Gabord, "one of nature's poet's and gentlemen." In the portrayal of Alixe, Parker was described as creating a "true woman." Moreover, the book was "full of thrilling scenes and action."

In his discussion of the book's point of view, Marquis waxed eloquent. Pointing to the difficulties of portraying the story through the eyes of Robert Moray, who is captive in a dark cell for most of the story, Marquis stated: "so admirably is the whole thing executed that the interest never fails." The point of view was "artistic."

The whole tone of the review is summed up in one statement: "There is in this book not one page of hasty work; in every detail there is a repose, a mastery, a fullness that bespeaks the mature artist."<sup>43</sup>

In contrast, the Globe felt that Parker's romance suffered from a number of defects which could be attributed to the haste with which the book had been written.<sup>44</sup> While the subject matter was "fascinating," the structure of the book was poor. Taking an opposite position to Marquis, the reviewer argued that Parker's style was sometimes prolix and the first person narrative was a "serious handicap." This resulted in a series of devices to account for the hero's knowledge of characters and their motives.

While the Globe felt that the characterization was good, the dramatic action was monotonous and ineffectual. Again this was a deficiency which resulted from the poor choice of point of view:

The comparative ease with which Mr. Parker, hampered by his limitations is able to delineate characters does not follow in his treatment of actions. Here Moray is obliged to resort for the most part on the assistance of a third party and the device usually fails. This is apparent in several of what should have been the strongest passages in the book—the quarrel in the palace between Bigot and

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<sup>43</sup>Week, 29-May 1896, pp. 643-44.

<sup>44</sup>"Books and Authors," rev. of The Seats of the Mighty, Globe, 20 June 1896, p. 14.

Cournal over Madame Cournal. Alixe's dance of death disguised as Madame Jamond before the drunken revellers, and last and most disappointing of all, the interview between Doltaire and Alixe in the Convent of the Ursulines, where he entreates her to yield to his love. In this event Moray plays the questionable part of an eavesdropper—a panel being devised through which he may observe his wife and her lover unseen. Thus Mr. Parker misses in each case a dramatic point.<sup>45</sup>

In summary, the Globe stated that the work had the effect of being "labored." While the writer felt that Parker had an "excellent prose style," he also had a tendency to "elaboration," "prolixity" and "over-definition." As the journalist concluded: "... one is charmed with its many individual beauties, such as sudden illuminations of character, swift convincing touches of description, uplifting sentiment, keen analysis of motive, glowing incident, alternation of light and shade. As a whole, however, the effect is distracting rather than great."<sup>46</sup> Critical opinions today echo the Globe far closer than they do the Week.

From the scattered works of fiction of the period, we turn to the outpouring of poetry. Here again production starts slowly. However, by 1890, a number of Canadian poets recognized today had published one or more volumes of poetry including the major names for which the period is recalled: Isabella Valancy Crawford, W. W.

<sup>45</sup>Globe, 9 May 1896, p. 16.

<sup>46</sup>Globe, 20 June 1896, p. 14.

Campbell, Bliss Carman, ~~Archibald~~ Lampman and Charles G.D. Roberts Duncan Campbell Scott would follow with his first volume in 1893. Two important anthologies of poetry also appeared in the latter part of this time period: Songs of the Great Dominion (1889) and Later Canadian Poets (1893).

In sampling this material, we shall look at newspaper reviews accorded both to a couple of minor works of the period and to works of the Confederation poets. This is important when it is recalled that newspaper reviewers were condemned for greeting all work with the same uncritical praise.

Of the numerous volumes which have long since been relegated to antiquarians' shelves, reviews of two works published thirteen years apart give an indication of the reception these poets received. Lyrics Songs And Sonnets, a joint collection by Amos Henry Chandler and Charles Pelham Mulvany (1880) and In Various Moods by Stuart Livingston (1893) were reviewed in both the newspapers and the contemporary periodicals. Again a comparison is instructive.

Lyrics Songs And Sonnets is divided into three parts.<sup>47</sup> The first and third sections were by C.P. Mulvany (1835-1885), a clergyman, author and classics professor. His poems were com-

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<sup>47</sup> Lyrics Songs and Sonnets (Toronto: Hunter Rose, 1880).



prised of lyrics, many on classical, medieval and religious themes; and translations of Greek and Latin poetry. The remainder of the volume by Amos Henry Chandler (1837- ?) contained sonnets and lyrics on themes of death and immortality, and a long narrative poem based on a New Brunswick Indian legend.

A review in the Globe devoted an equal portion to each poet. Mulvany's humour and elegant scholarship were set against Chandler's serious "native" renderings which were "racy of the soil." Neither were completely satisfactory. Chandler's poem "The Legend of Sylvalla" was commended; however, he was chided for taking too many liberties with the English language: "Flies like these, however, small, cause the sweetest ointment to be unsavoury." Mulvany was also taken to task for his translations of English hymns into Latin. The hymns were "pretty" but "weak."<sup>48</sup>

Reviewing the same publication, the writer in Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly devoted the largest part of their notice to the section of the book which contained Mulvany's work. His poems were introduced with a comment on the author's cosmopolitan background: "The Rev. Mr. Mulvany . . . has had the benefit of a varied experience, both here and abroad, and we trace in his classical translations and feminiscences the scholarly instincts

<sup>48</sup>"Book Notices," rev. of Lyrics, Songs and Sonnets, Globe, 5 June 1880, p. 7.

derived from a University education at Dublin."<sup>49</sup>

The writer suggested that Mulvany's contributions to the volume were creditable both to his "scholarly acquirements and his genuine poetic faculty." Such poems as "Poppea," "Nero's Gardens" and "Epicharis" made up a volume of "high excellence." The only sour note was sounded against the "vers de société" which seemed to have some "carelessness of writing."

After six paragraphs devoted to Mulvany's work, the final two of the review discussed Chandler's section of the volume. The most positive comment that Chandler received was the statement that his contributions "deserve[d] the praise of accuracy and originality." The narrative poem, "The Story of Sylvalla," was a tale of "varying excellence" and Chandler was chided for his irregular metre. However, on the whole, the writer concluded: "Mr. Chandler's share in Lyrics Songs and Sonnets is creditable to New Brunswick literature."<sup>50</sup>

Neither review is of a very high calibre. It is notable, however, that the Globe treated both men equally, while Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly reserved the largest space and the highest praise for the cosmopolitan works of C. P. Mulvany. This

<sup>49</sup>"Lyrics Songs and Sonnets," rev. Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, 4 (June, 1880), 663-64.

<sup>50</sup>Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, pp. 663-64.

attitude was a foreshadowing of the periodical response to such poets as Roberts and Lampman.

Stuart Livingston (1865-1923), a Hamilton lawyer and author, published his sole volume of poetry in 1894. In Various Moods is a slim book of just one hundred pages.<sup>51</sup> With the exception of a poem on the Northwest Rebellion and a few descriptive pieces, the themes are all traditional subjects. Titles, for example, include: "In Italy," "The Beautiful," and "The Death of the Poet." The critical attitudes which had been embryonically present in the foregoing Globe review of Chandler and Mulvany's collection became far more pronounced in the notice tendered Livingston's volume.

The Globe criticized both the subject matter and the technical standards of Livingston's work. The writer began by suggesting that Livingston should have been more judicious in his selection of poems and then went on to compare Livingston's work with several of his contemporaries:

That Mr. Livingston is a Canadian we have little in his book to remind us, indeed, we may say, without exception the poems might have been written by an alien. We formed a precedent from the work of Lampman, Scott and Campbell, who are one with our lakes and our skies; who picture in adequate language our flowers, our hills and

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<sup>51</sup>In Various Moods (Toronto: Briggs, 1894).

the coming of the seasons; who are truly and distinctively of Canada because Canada's beauty has been their inspiration. Therefore we are a trifle disappointed . . . in Mr. Livingston's poems so little . . . local in color—so little that reflects our sunsets, our wonderful lakes—our woodlands—so few descriptive touches and so much that may be shared in common with all poets.<sup>52</sup>

Even such local pieces as "In December" did not move the reviewer who felt such work suffered in comparison with similar pieces by Campbell and Scott.

Of the poems in general, the reviewer found several creditable and several which were poor imitations of British poets.

Poems such as "In Italy," "The King's Fool," "A Picture in a Locket," "My Lady's Mirror" and "Mary Magdalene" were commended. The sonnet to Keats, however, was described as a work which would have aroused protests from Keats himself. The "Death of the Poet," a poem written in commemoration of the death of Tennyson was described as a poem worth reading as there was "some originality" in its treatment.

The review was neither totally negative nor resolutely positive and the reviewer's ambivalence was explained in his conclusion. Because Livingston's work was concerned with the theme of beauty, the writer found it necessary to mitigate his earlier criticisms somewhat:

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<sup>52</sup>"Poetry and Fiction," rev. of In Various Moods, Globe, 24 March 1894, p. 5.

To sum up the character and worth of these poems is difficult, for we would say what we may not. They do not give evidence of greatness, nor are they exceptional in any way. Hundreds of lovers of the beautiful have said and are saying what this man utters. But the fact that he has known and has seen and expressed with what talent he might the truths that are too often hidden from many makes us at once his friend and sympathetic auditor.<sup>53</sup>

One could almost say that Livingston was damned by faint praise.

T. G. Marquis reviewed In Various Moods for the Week. In contrast to the Globe, Marquis felt that any volume by a Canadian should be welcomed. He further found the subject matter quite suitable and particularly emphasized the opening stanza of L'Envoi, and the poems "The Beautiful" and "The Death of the Poet."<sup>54</sup>

This last poem, a lament for Tennyson, is representative of the critical attitude which Marquis displayed throughout the review. The poem was described as a "particularly happy poem" and a "worthy lament" especially because Livingston utilized a "cadence caught from the laureate's lyre." The closing stanza, an extremely banal verse, was characterized as "strong, beautiful and original." It was "the work of a true poet, able to give us an insight into the soul of the great master whose disciple

<sup>53</sup> Globe, 24 March 1894, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> "Stuart Livingston's Poems," rev. Week, 16 March 1894, pp. 375-76.

he is."<sup>55</sup> In contrast to the Globe review which criticised Livingston for his failure to be distinctively Canadian, Marquis seemed to indicate that the imitation of Tennyson was a positive virtue in Livingston's work.

The review criticised some aspects of the volume such as a reminiscent note of Tom Moore, a tendency to a prose line and the use of feminine rhyme. These, however, were minor criticisms. Marquis concluded with a positive note, that on the whole, the volume was a "worthy addition to our rapidly growing library of Canadian poetry."<sup>56</sup>

Reviews of these two volumes of poetry indicate that critical attitudes were more present in newspaper reviews than in those of the periodicals. However, it could be argued that these reviews are not representative. For further evidence, therefore, we shall now look at the critical reception received by two members of the group of Confederation poets: Charles G.D. Roberts and Archibald Lampman.

In retrospect, Roberts' volume Orion And Other Poems (1880) is viewed as the landmark which heralded the advent of a group of distinctively Canadian poets.<sup>57</sup> Although the book received a posi-

<sup>55</sup>Week, 18 March 1894; pp. 375-76.

<sup>56</sup>Week, 18 March 1894; pp. 375-76.

<sup>57</sup>Orion And Other Poems (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1880).

tive welcome in Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, it does not seem to have been reviewed by any of the Toronto newspapers at the time of its publication.<sup>58</sup> Of course, it is very possible that copies of the book were never forwarded for review. Further, notwithstanding the fact that Lampman read a copy of Orion while at Trinity College, it is unlikely that the twenty year old Roberts was widely known in Toronto.<sup>59</sup> It should be recalled that Roberts was at the time a Maritimer just graduating from the University of New Brunswick. Later, Roberts' brief association with the Week (November, 1883 - February, 1884) would have introduced him to newspaper circles. Certainly, thereafter, his name was mentioned within the pages of the dailies.

In April, 1884, the Mail devoted part of their editorial page to an article on this first volume: Orion And Other Poems. Entitled "A Canadian Poet," the editorial opened with the comment that a review of the book was long overdue. The classical origins and the literary character of the title poem were cited as noteworthy since most first efforts of Canadian poets tended to be love songs and descriptive local colour of a purely personal nature.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup>"Orion And Other Poems," rev. Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, 5 (Nov. 1880), 552-53.

<sup>59</sup>See: "Two Canadian Poets: A Lecture, 1891," rep. Masks of Poetry, ed. A.J.M. Smith (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1962), p. 30.

<sup>60</sup>"A Canadian Poet," Editorial, Mail, 24 April 1884, p. 4.

The review dealt largely with the title poem "Orion." The story was summarized and several passages were reproduced. The poet's facility with epithets, his eye for natural scenery and his use of appropriate poetic language were all noted. Roberts' deftness in utilizing the imagery of the sea and its associations was recognized.

Other selections in the volume which the reviewer mentioned, in conclusion, included the ballad "The Shannon and The Chesapeake" and the "Epistle to Bliss Carman." The ballad was described as a "spirited" piece of writing on a historical theme. Roberts' desire to become a poet was emphasized by an extract from the second poem and the review closed by encouraging him in this vocation.<sup>61</sup>

The preceding review is important for two reasons. It recognized the literary achievement of Orion and it encouraged Roberts to continue to write. Reviews of subsequent books would urge Roberts to pursue his talent in specific directions.

Roberts' second collection In Divers Tones (1886) was noted in the Globe's "Literary Notes" column.<sup>62</sup> While the review did not mention any specific poems in the book, it is remarkable for

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<sup>61</sup>Mail, 24 April 1884, p. 4.

<sup>62</sup>C. G. D. Roberts, In Divers Tones (Boston: Lothrop, 1886).



the general attitude it took to Roberts' work. He was praised for his ability to see nature, his vocabulary and his skill in versification, but the poet was criticised heavily.

This volume contains passages of verse that confirms one's high opinion of the author's talent, but his work in general is stilted and badly marred by affectations of many sorts. If Mr. Roberts would cease from exercises in verse imitating the latter day imitators of classical models, if he would abstain from straining after 'art' and abandon himself to being natural, if . . . he would write from his own heart, head, observation and sense it is altogether probable that he might yet take rank as a true poet.<sup>63</sup>

While the Globe reviewer felt that Roberts had talent, he had not yet produced any poetry of more value than "pretty tiny brick-shaws" and "artificialities of pseudo-Greek motive." The review (concluded with an insight into Roberts' talent:

If Mr. Roberts were one of the usual literary weaklings one might perhaps bestow upon him the conventional meaningless praise, but he is strong enough to gain by hearing the reproaches of those who, believing his poems to be out of the common, are vexed that he does not produce something really worthy of admiration.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>"Literary Notes," rev. of In Divers Tones, Globe, 25 March 1887, p. 3.

<sup>64</sup>Globe, 25 March 1887, p. 3.

A review in the Week presented a divergent opinion. Roberts' classical themes were highly praised as the type of poetry which was characteristic of his serious writing. As this volume contained less serious material, the reviewer felt it somewhat disappointing, "in view of the loftier flights of song" of which Roberts had already shown himself capable.<sup>65</sup>

The Globe continued to suggest that Roberts' true metier lay in poetry which expressed the Canadian experience. An advance notice of Songs of the Common Day mentioned that while they did not fail to admire Roberts' poems on Greek subjects, they were impatient for him to "develop his genius by singing of common and Canadian things." According to the writer, the need to write of "things near and familiar" was the mark of maturity of the "true poet."<sup>66</sup>

Another article, a biographical sketch of Roberts and his work, appeared on the editorial page. Entitled "The Canadian Poet Charles G.D. Roberts," the article centred on the poem "Tantramar Revisited." In a study of Roberts' poetry, the late Desmond Pacey described this poem as handled with "masterly ease." The poem's success, according to Pacey, derives from a suitable verse form,

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<sup>65</sup>S.J. Duncan, "In Divers Tones," rev. Week, 13 March 1887, p. 280.

<sup>66</sup>"Literary Notes," Globe, 1 Nov. 1889, p. 4.

a definitive structure, accurate visual detail, and the "exact words . . ." in which to embody Roberts' vision.<sup>67</sup> This is almost an echo of the Globe's comments sixty-five years earlier: "In the 'Tantramar Revisited,' the author has found subject and medium, substance and form, feeling and rhythm working together most perfectly toward the happy expression of mood."<sup>68</sup>

When Songs of the Common Day finally appeared in 1893, it was reviewed in the Globe Book column "of Making Books There Is No End." This article again emphasized Roberts' preoccupation with themes of common everyday life. Roberts' poem "Plain as Potatoes" was compared favourably to the "Angelus" of the Barbizon painter, J.M. Millet. Several sonnets such as "When Milking Time Is Done" and "Frogs" were isolated for special mention. The poem "Tantramar Revisited" is described as displaying the "rich word painting" at which Roberts "excels" and exhibiting the "human touch that is not so common in his verse." The ode in honour of Shelley is merely remarked upon as having been published before.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>"Sir Charles G.D. Roberts," in Ten Canadian Poets (Toronto: Ryerson, 1958, rep. 1969), p. 48.

<sup>68</sup>"The Canadian Poet Charles G.D. Roberts," Globe, 23 Nov. 1889, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup>"Of the Making of Books There Is No End," rev. of Songs of the Common Day, Globe, 7 Oct. 1893, p. 10; C.G.D. Roberts, Songs of the Common Day (Toronto: Briggs, 1893).

As T. G. MacLulich has demonstrated, the response to Roberts' work exhibited in the periodicals was quite different. His classical poems were praised; Roberts' resemblance to Keats and Shelley enhanced his stature rather than exhibited his limitations. While Roberts' sympathy with nature was seen as the characteristic which distinguished Canadian poetry, his realism was viewed with reservations.<sup>70</sup> It was Roberts' idealism which appealed to the periodical reviewers.

T. G. Marquis' review of Songs of the Common Day in the Week is typical of the critical response to Roberts manifested by the periodicals. Marquis mentioned the "realistic force" of Roberts' sonnets and his interest in the common subjects of external nature. Over half the review, however, was devoted to "Ave," the ode Roberts wrote to celebrate the centennial of Shelley's birth. Marquis called this poem the "strongest and most original" of Roberts' works. It was a masterpiece which could be placed alongside of Shelley's own "Adonais."<sup>71</sup>

In Ten Canadian Poets, Desmond Pacey discussed the critical reception which Roberts received from the pens of his contemporary critics up to 1896. Pacey noted that Roberts was

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<sup>70</sup> MacLulich, p. 10-14.

<sup>71</sup> "Songs of the Common Day," rev. Week, 22 Sept. 1893, p. 1023.

overpraised. Critics particularly essayed the style of his early poetry and the nobility of his themes. When they did criticise Roberts' work, it was to indicate that his talents were wasted on descriptive poetry of the type for which he was, in Pacey's opinion, best suited.<sup>72</sup>

Pacey's remarks are certainly applicable to periodical critics. However, the preceding reviews make it clear that such comments are not entirely accurate in regard to the newspapers, at least those of Toronto. The Globe clearly regarded Roberts' local descriptive poetry as his best.<sup>73</sup> Conversely, his highly polished classical imitations on lofty themes were seen for what they were: imitations of imitations.<sup>74</sup>

Late in 1888, Archibald Lampman published his first volume of poetry entitled Among the Millet, And Other Poems.<sup>75</sup> While the newspaper reception accorded this highly esteemed poet was not quite so perceptive as that tendered Roberts, it was still in marked contrast to that which appeared in the periodicals.

Mrs. Frances Harrison (1859-1935), a Toronto writer and critic who wrote under the pseudonym of "Seranus," reviewed

<sup>72</sup>Pacey, p. 38.

<sup>73</sup>Globe, 23 Nov. 1889, p. 8.

<sup>74</sup>Globe, 25 March 1887, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup>Among the Millet, And Other Poems (Ottawa: Durie, 1388).

Lampman's publication in the Week. Describing her task as a "rare privilege," in a country where "mere surface Canadianism," was "vaunted to the skies," Harrison described Lampman's volume as a "delightful collection of verse." She continued:

At first sight Mr. Lampman's poems appear almost entirely free from native Canadian flavour—in their sustained reflection, in their philosophic sweep, in their occupation of high and difficult fortresses of thought, they seem to be worthy of some new Shelley or some colder Keats who three thousand miles away, has worked out the salvation of the world through the medium of poetry. But on closer examination, it is discovered that the grave thoughts, the powers of reflection and the unusually broad and philosophic reading of nature and of human life and enterprise combined have been nearly all suggested and inspired by a great love and sympathy with nature itself and particularly those aspects of nature which we are disposed to call Canadian.<sup>76</sup>

Lampman's poetry was compared favourably in terms of diction, style and themes to that of Arnold, Rossetti and Swinburne. Although Harrison praised Lampman's lofty tone, she did suggest that this resulted in a somewhat cold, unimpetuous stance. Harrison noticed gratefully, however, that the poems were also devoid of that sensuous eroticism which was the "sin of the modern school."

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<sup>76</sup>"Among the Millet And Other Poems," rev. Week, 28 Dec. 1888, p. 59.

Poems isolated for special mention included "Ballade of Summer's Sleep," "Unrest," "One Day" and "An Athenian Reverie," the latter being likened to Heine and Theocritus. Harrison found the "ripest fruit" among the sonnets. Among these, "Knowledge," "The Poets" and "November" were selected as examples of Lampman's "cleverest and most elevated thought." The review concluded that Lampman would not have a wide readership: "But as there have always been and will always be readers of John Keats, of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and of the Arnolds so there will be . . . readers of Archibald Lampman."<sup>77</sup>

In general, Harrison's review praised Lampman for three characteristics: his likeness to several British and Continental poets of international renown; his fidelity to nature; and his lofty themes. Lampman was "some new Shelley" or "Keats." He was likened to Matthew and Edwin Arnold, Heinrich Heine, D. G. Rossetti, A. C. Swinburne and even Theocritus. While it was Lampman's descriptive poetry that made him distinctively Canadian, Harrison was somewhat ambivalent in her attitude to such thematic inspiration. For, as she stated, the phenomena of nature as "aids to poetic expression were "triter" than the public was aware."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Week, 28 Dec. 1888, p. 59.

<sup>78</sup>Week, 28 Dec. 1888, p. 59.

Moreover, the tone of the review indicated that to be merely Canadian was to be inferior! Thus, Lampman's resemblance to the forementioned poetic pantheon and his elevated expression were in Harrison's view, particularly to be prized.

Newspaper notices also welcomed Lampman's first volume warmly. Here, however, it was Lampman's fidelity to nature which became the major thrust of reviewers.

The Empire mentioned Among the Millet in two notices, once prior to publication, and once shortly after its December, 1888 appearance. Citing Lampman's fugitive contributions to American periodicals as evidence that he possessed "in no slight degree many of the characteristics of the true poet," the present volume was welcomed as a means of introducing his work to a larger circle of readers. This reviewer described Lampman's poetic qualities in terms of his appreciation of nature:

Like all true sons of the muse of poetry. Mr. Lampman has an obviously intense delight in the beautiful and the good, while his sympathy is so intense at times as to amount almost to positive pain; he interprets nature with fidelity, and his portrayal [sic] of the deeper emotions of the human heart is evidently the work of one who has thought and felt deeply on the mysterious problems of existence. His style is generally strong and forcible, and though he never rises to the heights of hysteric passion he never sinks to the bathos of mere sentimentalism.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup>"Book Notices," rev. of Among the Millet, Empire, 21 Dec. 1888, p. 4.



Although the Empire article was not a very penetrating review, it did recognize Lampman's thematic concerns and his strong sense of style.

A few months after the book's appearance, the Globe carried a two-column article on its editorial page devoted to Among the Millet. The review opened with the statement that since the publication of Lampman's volume "there has been no truth in the assertion . . . that Canada has never produced a great poet." According to the writer, Lampman's poetic qualities were sincerity, the ability to see infinitude in common things, and an ability to convey his impressions clearly, accurately and melodiously.<sup>80</sup>

Lampman's simple diction and accurate scene depiction were noted at length. Quoting two lines from "Heat" describing the grasshopper's sound, the reviewer perceptively stated: "The utmost precision of scientific statement could not make so definite an impression on the mind as the poetic accuracy of these lines." It was a comment which many a twentieth century critic has reiterated. Equally perceptive were the comments which emphasized Lampman's "deliberate choice of ordinary every-day words" and his avoidance of what might be termed poetic language.

Lampman's alternating vision, a preoccupation of recent critics of the poet, was likewise considered. Quoting from "The

<sup>80</sup>"Among the Millet," rev. Globe, 10 Aug. 1889, p. 8.

"Frogs," the Globe noted that Lampman's lesson to mankind was: "that change and pain are shadows faint and fleet, And dreams are real, and life is only sweet." The reviewer, however, went on to point out that the book was not always optimistic: "Not that 'Among the Millet' is entirely free from sadness. That is the disease of the age, and the sensitive mind of the poet must reflect the environment in which he lives." Lampman's extremely pessimistic poem, "An Impression," was quoted as evidence of this strain. Thus, in this early review of Lampman's poetry, the Globe not only isolated prominent Lampman themes, but the reviewer suggested the general malaise of the late Victorian era as a significant cause of Lampman's morbidity.<sup>81</sup> Such a suggestion would not resurface in Lampman studies until the late 1940s.

While the review in the Globe was more illuminating than the one in the Empire, both indicated an appreciation of Lampman's intrinsic qualities. Unlike Harrison's article in the Week, neither newspaper reviewer found it necessary to compare Lampman to the established canon. His actual qualities were merely pointed out and he was acknowledged for the Canadian poet he was.

It has been remarked that Lampman's second collection, Lyrics of Earth (1896) received little critical response.<sup>82</sup> The

<sup>81</sup>Globe, 10 Aug. 1889, p. 8.

<sup>82</sup>D. M. R. Bentley, Introduction, Archibald Lampman Lyrics of Earth (Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1978), pp. 4-7.

Week, for instance, which had given his first volume two reviews and had even included Lampman in their "Prominent Canadians" series, does not seem to have reviewed the volume. As for the Toronto newspapers, only the newly amalgamated Mail and Empire appears to have noticed the book.

At first glance, the Mail and Empire notice which appeared in their "Contemporary Literature" column, seems undistinguished. The review is short and repeats what was by then a Lampman truism; namely, that his chief characteristic was a "profound sympathy with Nature in all her forms."<sup>83</sup> There are, however, two aspects of the review which are noteworthy: the attitude to the type of work exhibited, and the actual quality of poems in the slim volume.

While it was not actually named as such, the reviewer noted the transcendental theme of the book. The writer stated:

In the meadow, the bud, the beast, the tree, he  
[Lampman] finds a brother with whom he holds  
sweet and loving converse; and from whom he  
learns their secrets incommunicable to any but  
those who have loving and sympathetic hearts.  
He hears the

Songs that winter may not tame  
Drone of pines and laugh of rivers.

To him on a bright day in April

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<sup>83</sup>"Contemporary Literature," rev. of Lyrics of Earth,  
Mail and Empire, 14 Nov. 1896, p. 6.

The world is wide and fair,  
 With sunny fields and lucid air  
 And waters dancing everywhere.

.....  
 The channels run, the bare earth streams,  
 And every hollow rings and gleams,  
 With jetting falls and dashing streams.

He feels the 'tumult of new birth' wakens 'with  
 the wakening earth' a match for 'the bluebird in  
 her mirth.'

And wild with wind and sun  
 Till earth and he [sic] are one.<sup>84</sup>

The reviewer's approach to Lampman's thought was very similar to that which the poet himself used to describe Emerson in a "Mermaid Inn" column.<sup>85</sup>

Finally, the reviewer described the book as a "distinct improvement" on anything Lampman had previously published. Traditionally, most critics have felt that Lampman's second volume failed to show any development from Among the Millet. Recently, however, some critics have begun to reexamine the book. D.M.R. Bentley, notably, has asserted that there are major differences in the two volumes. He has suggested that the Lampman of Lyrics

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<sup>84</sup>Mail and Empire, 14 Nov., 1896, p. 16.

<sup>85</sup>Lampman stated: "Emerson's sympathy with nature is not . . . in the main that of an **observer**, the student, or the artist; it is a sympathy of force, a cosmic sympathy. He is drawn to nature because in the energies of his own soul he is aware of a kinship to the forces of nature, and feels with an elemental joy as if it were a part of himself the eternal movement of life." "At the Mermaid Inn," Globe, 22 April 1893, p. 6.

of Earth "is not only a mature poet, but also a good one."<sup>86</sup>

Thus, even this review indicates that Lampman received serious consideration from the pens of Toronto newspaper reviewers. As was the case with Roberts, such reviews reveal that the qualities for which Lampman was appreciated were many of the ones for which he is esteemed today. A similar pattern emerges in reviews devoted to Campbell, Carman and Scott. In fact, by 1895, the Globe was able to state that the recent publications of Lampman, Roberts, Duncan Campbell Scott and Bliss Carman were "without exaggeration events of the greatest importance in the development of Canadian literature."<sup>87</sup> It is clear, therefore, that the newspapers both recognized and were receptive to developments in the areas of Canadian literary endeavour.

Moreover, the newspapers were often a forum for introducing the works of various authors to the Canadian public. While it is probable that authors received little remuneration for such works, it does not necessarily follow that their productions were ignored by the Toronto newspapers. Within the confines of this study, it is impossible to survey this vast amount of material. The mention of a few titles, however, will give an indication of the richness of

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<sup>86</sup>Bentley, pp. 15-17.

<sup>87</sup>"Some New Books . . . Some Remarks on Canadian Literature," Globe, 10 March 1895, p. 10.

this material.

In the field of fiction, it would appear that the short story or sketch was the genre with which Canadian authors were most frequently associated in the newspapers. The roll call included many of the young authors who were just coming on to the scene in the 1880s and 1890s. Stories which would be later published as collections lay buried within the pages of these journals. For example, of the stories which would form E.W. Thomson's two books Old Man Savarin (1895) and Old Man Savarin: Tales of Canada and Canadians (1917), three were published in the Globe between 1885 and 1887: namely, "Petherick's Peril," "McGrath's Bad Night" and "Little Baptiste." Another five stories by Thomson also appeared during this same period.<sup>88</sup>

Robert Barr (1850-1912), an expatriate writer who was outspoken in his criticism of Canada for its failure to support its writers, had several stories published in the Globe in the 1890s. The Mutable Many also appeared in the Mail and Empire during 1896.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>"Petherick's Peril," Globe, 25 April 1885; "McGrath's Bad Night," Globe, 22 Oct. 1887; "Little Baptiste," Globe, 26 Nov. 1887; "Not By Accident," Globe, 2 May 1885; "Very Hard Up," Globe, 11 July 1885; "Le Chien D'Or of Quebec A Legend of Injury and Revenge," Globe, 28 Sept. 1885; "A Campfire Story," Globe, 30 Nov. 1885; "Over The Falls," Globe, 20 Feb. 1886.

<sup>89</sup>"The Heralds of Fame," Globe, 12 Nov. 1892; "The Revolt of the —," Globe, 31 Oct. 1896; "A Deal on Charge," Globe, 19 Dec. 1896; "The Typewritten Letter," Christmas Globe, 1896; "The Mutable Many," Mail and Empire, 21 Nov. 1896.

Stephen Leacock's delightful sketch, "My Financial Career," was another story which appeared in a Toronto newspaper. An 1895 edition of the News carrying the sketch described it as the "cleverest short story printed in many a day."<sup>90</sup>

Novelists Sara Jeannette Duncan and Gilbert Parker each had at least one novel serialized in the Globe. Duncan's The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib appeared during 1893 and Parker's Nor King Nor Country in 1896.<sup>91</sup>

These are just a few of the many works which appeared during the sixteen year period of this study. Other writers such as Isabella Valancy Crawford, Frances Harrison, Fidele Holland, Annie Rothwell and A. E. Wetherald were all represented. In addition, there are countless anonymous stories which were commissioned by the various newspapers in question. These stories all tended to have Canadian settings and dealt with various aspects of Canadian life such as the northwest and pioneer life. Themes ranged from romances to prohibition.

Canadian poets similarly had works appearing in the poetry section which the newspapers all featured. Some of these poems were reprints from American periodicals although a number were

<sup>90</sup>Attributed to E. A. Nash, "My Financial Career," News, 28 Nov. 1895.

<sup>91</sup>The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib, Globe, 14 Jan. 1893; Nor King Nor Country, Globe, 4 April 1896.

original publications. I. V. Crawford's work, for example, first appeared largely in Toronto newspapers. The Telegram was especially fond of publishing local poets. In addition to Crawford, Robert Awde, H. K. Cockin, John Imrie, Alexander McLachlan and Robert Kernighan along with a host of other long lost Toronto songsters had numerous selections published in this newspaper. Carman, Lampman and Roberts seem to have, in general, been reprinted from such periodicals as Harper's and Scribner's. This was, no doubt, due to the fact that these poets were able to command the higher prices paid by American publications.

In addition to reviews and actual publications of Canadian authors, the Toronto newspapers occasionally featured special articles devoted to Canadian litterateurs and general assessments of Canadian letters. The former articles were of two types: thumb nail sketches of individual writers, or interviews. The latter tended to be enumerative and descriptive. In effect, both general types of articles were intended to chart the Canadian literary landscape as it had evolved to date and to bring before the public the names (and often the faces since after 1890 photographs often accompanied biographical sketches) of those who were laying the groundwork of a distinctive Canadian literature.

The biographical sketches of Canadian authors could be classed as human interest stories. Such articles focussed on the



formative influences of the author's life, his or her introduction to the literary profession and, finally, the writer's contribution to Canadian life and letters. The headings preceding an article on Alexander McLachlan published in the News and which described him as occupying a "foremost place in the nucleus of a national literature," give an indication of the content and tone of such articles: "In A Poet's Home/McLachlan on His Farm Up in Amaranth Township/ He Is a Student of and a Believer in Spiritualism/He Also Thinks Annexation Will Occur,/Though Not For a Long Time Yet."<sup>92</sup>

Other more general articles were intended to introduce the names and works of various Canadian authors to the reading public at large. An 1893-94 series in the Globe, for example, titled "Our Canadian Poets" and authored by a Thomas Conant, were of this type.<sup>93</sup> A similar article by Nora Laughier appeared in an 1888 edition of the News entitled "About Canadian Poets. Footprints In The Literary Sands of Time."<sup>94</sup>

A second type of general article was of the state of the art type. The Globe, for instance, appears to have commissioned the prestigious American journalist, Edward W. Box, to comment on

<sup>92</sup>"A Poet's Home," News, 27 Aug. 1892, p. 7.

<sup>93</sup>"Our Canadian Poets," Globe, 2 Dec. 1893, p. 1; 23 Dec. 1893, p. 7; 20 Jan. 1894, p. 3.

<sup>94</sup>"Canadian Poets," News, 21 April 1888, p. 8.

the "growing school of Canadian writers." Box was the well-known editor of Ladies Home Journal and vice-president of Curtis Publishing Company. He had introduced such figures as Rudyard Kipling, Mark Twain, W.D. Howells and Bret Harte to the mass reading public through the pages of Ladies Home Journal. Now, he was to proclaim in the Globe that the work of such poets as Carman, Campbell, Roberts, and Scott, and such fiction writers as Allen, Oxley and Parker was some of the "cleverest work" appearing in American publications.<sup>95</sup>

Thus, Toronto newspapers both supported the development of Canadian literature and actively promoted its growth. Through reviews, publications of actual works and evaluative articles, the newspapers provided a large forum for the dissemination of Canadian literary culture. Moreover, the content of such articles indicates that the newspapers contained both an attitude of discernment and a sense of nativism less evident in the periodicals.

Contrary to Lampman's assertion, this chapter reveals that the newspapers did not treat all authors with the "same ridiculous praises decked out in the same fulsome and meaningless phraseology."<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>"Young Canadian Writers From An American Standpoint," [sic] Globe, 1 April 1893, p. 17. This same article appeared in a somewhat modified form in the News, 8 April 1893, as a reprint from the Philadelphia Times.

<sup>96</sup>"At the Mermaid Inn," Globe, 19 March 1892, pp. 8-9.

Newspapers made distinctions between different authors and often pointed out various defects of particular writers or poets. Thus Stuart Livingston's work was not accorded the same enthusiastic reception that Roberts and Lampman received.

Moreover, the language in the newspapers tended to be rather concrete and uneffusive. It was characterized by common diction and colloquial language. One must turn to the periodicals to find volumes of poetry described as "bouquets," "wreaths," or other similar metaphors.

In contrast to the forthright criticism of the newspapers, reviews in the periodicals were often genuinely uncritical. Critics such as Graeme Mercer Adam and T. G. Marquis even indicated that it was a patriotic duty to praise any contribution to the new nation's literature.<sup>97</sup> Thus, when negative criticism does appear in the periodicals, it tends to be veiled or hedged. On the whole, however, most Canadian literary productions were "worthy" or "noble" and "well-deserving of support."

Finally, the newspapers demonstrated a distinct nationalistic pride that is in marked contrast to the colonialism of periodical critics. A. J. M. Smith has defined colonialism as a tendency to look to some other centre as the standard for evaluating the

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<sup>97</sup>See: G. M. Adam, "National Literature and the Scoffing Spirit," Week, 5 Jan. 1888, pp. 85-86.

cultural productions of one's own country.<sup>98</sup> For the most part, newspaper reviews emphasized the distinctive Canadian features of a writer and were proud of qualitative efforts to depict Canada. In contrast, the traits which the periodical critics singled out in their reviews of Canadian authors were those that linked them to the established British or classical writers.

This colonialist attitude was prevalent in the periodicals. It has been remarked that to be a Canadian Shelley or a Canadian Keats was a high compliment.<sup>99</sup> Thus, we have seen Frances Harrison describe Archibald Lampman in this manner. Similarly, T.G. Marquis praised C.G.D. Roberts for his Shelley-like Ode and Stuart Livingston for his Tennysonian lament. For reviewers in the periodicals, such cosmopolitan echoes meant that Canada's literature was no longer backward, crude, or provincial. It could now be favourably compared with that of the established literary centres.

Not only was this colonialism notably absent in the newspapers, but there are even suggestions that it was an attitude to

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<sup>98</sup>"Colonialism and Nationalism in Canadian Poetry Before Confederation," Proceedings of the Canadian Historical Association 1944, pp. 74-84. Rpt. in A.J.M. Smith, Towards A View of Canadian Letters (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973), pp. 33-46.

<sup>99</sup>MacLulich noted that Roberts' resemblance to Tennyson and his debt to Keats and Shelley tended to enhance his stature "rather than condemn him or demonstrate his limitations," pp. 10-14.

be deplored. Newspaper articles reveal much more patience in awaiting the arrival of a distinctive Canadian literature. There is less of a messianic attitude to each new creative work, and thus less of a disappointment when over-aroused expectations do not materialize. Moreover, newspaper reviewers assumed that there would have to be a relationship between art and society. The Globe, for instance, argued that literature which did not deal with life observed closely at hand would always be a failure. According to the writer, a major difficulty with Canadian literature resulted from its tendency to imitate foreign literature rather than to recreate Canadian life. In fact, the Globe observed, such work was often "very poor imitations of very poor foreign literature."<sup>100</sup>

It was due to the fact that Roberts, Lampman, Campbell and Scott were portraying Canadian life, that the publication of their volumes were "events of the greatest importance" in the view of the Globe. Based on the attitudes revealed in their columns, other Toronto newspapers would have, at least, partially agreed with them.

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"Some New Books," Globe, 10 March 1895, p. 10.

## CHAPTER V

### BRUSH AND PALETTE: ATTITUDES TO PAINTING IN THE NEWSPAPERS

In the past, columns have been written, brimming over with fulsome praise and indiscriminate flattery, until many who read the criticisms begin to think and believe that true art has its home only in Ontario, and that here alone are to be found the gems of the painter's brush.

Massey's Magazine, 1896<sup>1</sup>

Discussions of Canadian painters and painting in the Toronto newspapers were like those devoted to literature, characterized by a reasoned desire to see the visual arts developed as a qualitative, native culture. Newspapers praised painters for utilizing Canadian subject matter. Conversely, artists who revealed a too slavish tendency to imitate English and French subject matter were severely criticised. These articles indicate that the newspapers wholly supported the efforts of Canadian artists. Yet, when it was thought necessary, writers in the dailies were not afraid to criticise either painters or their work.

In contrast to the often vehement condemnations of the newspapers by those engaged in the field of literature, there is little

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<sup>1</sup>E. F. B. Johnstone, Q. C., "Art At the Ontario Society of Artists' Exhibition," Massey's Magazine, 1 (June, 1896).

record that artists complained their efforts were being ignored by the newspapers. Inasmuch as complaints about art criticism existed, they were the provenance of such people as Sara Jeannette Duncan, a critic whose negative attitudes stemmed from a belief that the newspapers were the vehicle of the culture-hating Philistines. Rather, as was seen in Chapter II, it seems that the artists so valued their good relationships with the newspapers that they made an active effort to court members of the press.

Negative comments were directed at the content and tone of newspaper articles dealing with Canadian art rather than at a general lack of reportage on the subject. Generally, writers in the periodicals felt the newspapers displayed a lack of discrimination and a tendency towards overgenerous praise. As one critic in the Week put it, "the newspapers have given generous aid, but there has been little or no instructive criticism."<sup>2</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan even attributed Ontario's cultural lethargy, in part, to the fact that newspapers utilized general reporters rather than art critics to cover art exhibitions.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in surveying the material in the newspapers, the same method utilized in the chapter on literature will be employed.

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<sup>2</sup>W.D., "The Value of a Picture," Week, 16 Aug. 1889, p. 586.

<sup>3</sup>"Saunterings," Week, 20 Jan. 1887, p. 120.

On occasion, comparison of content and attitudes in the newspapers will be made to similar material in the periodicals. Again, this should enable an evaluation to be made of the qualitative level of newspaper criticism.

As was the case with literature, if artistic standards were low in the Toronto press, the lack of specialized knowledge on the part of reporters was only one contributing factor. For, as Quentin Bell remarked, the nineteenth century was an "age of aesthetic fragmentation" with a resultant bewildering number of cross-currents and a multiplicity of styles. In Britain and Europe, academy standards were being challenged on the one hand, and reaffirmed on the other.<sup>4</sup> Certainly in the United States, Barbara Novak has pointed out that the nineteenth-century dialogue on landscape painting was being conducted with "great intensity and passion."<sup>5</sup> Thomas Flexner went even further when he noted that in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the dominant American aesthetic "denied the validity of American inspiration" by seeking the art and culture of Europe.<sup>6</sup> The various polarities would have been confusing to

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<sup>4</sup>Victorian Artists (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1967), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>"On Divers Themes From Nature," in The Natural Paradise Painting in America 1800-1950, ed. Kynaston McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1976), p. 60.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas Flexner, Nineteenth Century American Painting (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), p. 155.



sophisticated art connoisseurs. Thus it is little wonder if newspaper reviewers in a provincial city like Toronto found the critical task difficult.

Nonetheless, painters and art exhibitions were accorded a prominent position within Toronto newspapers. Nor was this a phenomenon that began in 1880. Toronto art exhibitions had been reviewed from their earliest beginnings in the provincial agricultural fairs. With the founding of the Ontario Society of Artists in 1872, these exhibitions became an annual highlight of the newspapers. From 1880 onward, the newspapers expanded their coverage to the exhibitions of the new Royal Canadian Academy. As further artistic groups appeared in the 1880s and 1890s, such as the Palette Club, the Toronto Art Students' League and the Women's Art Association, these too had their exhibitions reviewed by the daily journals.

Reviews of the exhibitions of the Academy, Society and various other associations were one aspect of art culture reported in the daily newspapers. Exhibitions at what we might term commercial galleries were also noted. Such galleries as Samuel Roberts and Matthew Brothers were occasionally featured when they held special exhibitions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>See: for example, "A Modest Art Depository," Mail, 10 March 1888, p. 5 or "Toronto Art Gallery," Mail, 21 Nov. 1889, p. 5.

The dailies, similarly, reported open studio events and special unveilings. In 1881, for example, Lucius O'Brien's two canvases of Quebec (Quebec From Levis and View From the King's Bastion, Quebec), commissioned by Queen Victoria, received extended coverage in this manner.<sup>8</sup> Again, in 1890, G.A. Reid's two monumental paintings (Mortgaging the Homestead and The Other Side of the Question) were reviewed extensively following a private viewing.<sup>9</sup>

Biographical sketches of both Canadian and European artists and reproductions of their paintings formed a part of the Saturday supplements of the 1890s. Often these were combined in an interview article. For example, Mrs. Charlotte Schreiber (1834-1922), a charter member of the Academy and the only woman member at the time, was the subject of an 1895 Globe weekly feature entitled "One of Our Artists." The article encompassed two full pages and was accompanied by some twelve reproductions of Mrs. Schreiber's paintings.<sup>10</sup>

On the whole, however, it was exhibition reviews which accounted for the bulk of the newspaper space devoted to Canadian paintings. Most reviews in the Toronto newspapers tended to be

<sup>8</sup>"Pictures of Quebec," Globe, 2 May 1881, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup>"Canadian Art," Mail, 15 April 1890, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup>"One of Our Artists," Globe, 2 May 1895, supp.; p. 1.

descriptive in nature and included short comments on as many paintings as could be included within the space allowed. Articles often commenced with a general appraisal of the exhibition, usually concluding that in "quality" and "quantity" the particular exhibition being reviewed was "in advance" of all previous ones. The remainder of such articles were devoted to a mention of the numerous paintings and watercolours exhibited. Subject matter, and a brief comment on the use of colour, and approach to the foreground and background, constituted the descriptive approach to these works.

Some journalists took this process one step further in a cursory attempt at analysis. The organization of the composition, the relationship of colour and line, and the stylistic characteristics were sometimes discussed as part of the analytic response to a work of art.

More frequently, however, writers jumped from the first step of description to interpretation and judgement. Such critics tended to deal with the work in terms of their private response. Thus, occasionally, we have naïve judgements of the "I don't like it" and "I do like it" variety.<sup>11</sup>

It should be recalled, however, that on the whole the professional art historian or critic was not a product of the nineteenth century. In general, the writer of reviews was a man of letters,

<sup>11</sup>See: "Royal Canadian Academy of Arts," Globe, 22 April 1882, p. 6.

whose wide background enabled him to comment on various aspects of culture, including literature and art. The journalist was often even less of a specialist. His writing assignments often covered a wide variety of tasks which ranged from reporting political rallies, to recording executions and covering art exhibitions.

Sometimes the newspapers hired special correspondents to cover the art scene. In 1896, the Mail and Empire hired Harriet Ford, a Toronto painter, as a special correspondent to review the Royal Canadian Academy exhibition held in Montreal that year.<sup>12</sup> The Globe similarly employed Professor James Mavor, then professor of political economy at the University of Toronto and formerly editor of the Scottish Art Review, to comment on the Ontario Society of Artists exhibition of that same year.<sup>13</sup> Most reviews, however, were written by the various anonymous reporters assigned to cover that particular event. The content of these unsigned articles indicate the response art works were accorded. Moreover, these articles exemplify the attitudes toward Canadian painting which were disseminated in the Toronto newspapers during the years 1880-1896.

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<sup>12</sup>"Canadian Pictures," Mail and Empire, 17 March 1896, p. 3; 24 March 1896, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup>"Ontario Artists," Globe, 21 May 1896, p. 5.

During the sixteen years of this study, the Royal Canadian Academy and the various Toronto-based art societies held some forty-five art exhibitions in the city of Toronto. In addition, the Royal Canadian Academy held another ten exhibitions in either Ottawa or Montreal, as well as one in Halifax. These exhibitions were reviewed by at least two and often by all the Toronto dailies. Thus this rich material affords insights into the trends and attitudes which were present in Toronto during the years 1880-1896.

Before turning to the reviews themselves, a brief sketch of those names who dominated the painting scene might be in order. Unlike the development of Canadian literature the year 1880 is not marked for heralding the appearance of a new group of painters who would paint Canada in a professional but innovative manner. It is important because the establishment of the Royal Canadian Academy gave credence to the professional ambitions of a number of painters who had been developing reputations as artists in the preceding decade.

Because of their established positions, those who formed the charter membership of the academy were the painters whose work received the most extended reviews during the early 1880s. This group included such painters as A.A. Edson (1846-1888), J.A. Fraser (1838-1898), Daniel Fowler (1810-1894), Robert Harris (1849-1919), Marmaduke Matthews (1837-1913), T. Mower Martin

(1838-1934), Lucius O'Brien (1832-1900), and Henry Sandham (1842-1910).<sup>14</sup>

Others would join the academy ranks throughout the decade. Painters such as F.M. Bell-Smith (1846-1923), William Brymner (1855-1925), Paul Peel (1860-1892), G.A. Reid (1860-1947), and Homer Watson (1858-1936), were all building solid reputations throughout the early years of this study. Their names would gradually achieve more prominence in newspaper reviews as members of the first group for one reason or another slowly retired from the scene.

Of the vast array of short comments devoted to the works of these and many other painters, we will begin by looking at the newspaper response to three well-known works. As the sampling is representative of the type of material contained in the Exhibition reviews published in the dailies, this will set the stage, as it were, for a more generalized discussion.

The diploma works of the charter members of the Royal Canadian Academy are, doubtlessly, among the most important works of the early 1880s. Together with important works such as the several Royal Commissions and gallery purchases, these paintings represent a cross-section of the work being done in the 1880s

<sup>14</sup>For a complete list of the members of the Academy, see: Rebecca Sisler, Passionate Spirits (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1980), pp. 279-89.

and 1890s. Moreover, such men as J. A. Fraser, Lucius O'Brien and Homer Watson played an important role in the Canadian art scene of the period. Thus, it is appropriate to look at the response which newspaper reviews made to their works.

Fraser's diploma piece, Laurentian Splendour, actually a view of Mount Orford and the lake at its base, was treated extensively by the Globe reviewer.<sup>15</sup> As the passage is a typical example of the type of picturesque and detailed descriptions such paintings received, it will be quoted at length. Calling Laurentian Splendour one of the "masterpieces" of the exhibition, the writer stated in part:

In the background rises an immense mountain of Laurentian rock, forming an almost regular convex, whose base stretches nearly from side to side of the picture. Right at the base of this immense mountain is a small lake, the convex sweep of whose shore, curving into the foreground, makes with the outline of the top of the mountain an oval of singular symmetry. In the immediate foreground is a low shore of moss-covered rocks and small, thick shrubbery, while to the right of the lake, near the bushy shore, stands a pretty and romantic-looking log house, the grey curling smoke from the old stone chimney lightening up the deep green of the foliage with a singularly pleasing and harmonious effect. From this shore a low narrow peninsula, covered with wild shrubs and small trees, runs well out into the lake, and opposite this across a narrow channel, is a small wooded islet. The

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<sup>15</sup> Reproduced in Appendix I.

left shore of the lake is also thickly covered with dark green foliage. The lighting of the picture is particularly bold and effective. Above the mountain peak is a belt of dark sky flecked with thin curling clouds of red and grey, while the whole crest and . . . the whole upper half of the mountain is lit up with the red rays of the sun, now near the horizon the brilliant light upon the copper coloured rocks producing a startling and brilliant effect. Below this line of sunlight the mountain lies in a deep purple shade. Close to the base of the mountain and in deepest shade the unruffled water slips in a dark bell of purple and black, while a 'cat's paw' blowing down through the narrows brings with it an irregular belt of lighter blue, and still farther in the foreground close to the curving shore, the motionless water catches the fiery reflection of the reddened mountain peak.<sup>16</sup>

In summation Laurentian Splendour was described as strongly executed. The writer pointed out that though Mount Orford was the ostensible locale of the painting, the scene had been "idealized" so that the resulting painting was not a mere transcript: "It gives the beholder the impression of something powerfully realistic. A certain phase of nature was presented and it has been presented in such a manner that it will not be easy for anyone who has seen the picture to forget it."<sup>17</sup>

A somewhat similar judgement was given by a writer in the Mail. This reviewer wrote that Fraser's Laurentian Splendour

<sup>16</sup>"The Academy of Art," Globe, 8 March 1880, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup>Globe, 8 March 1880, p. 4.



brought out in "bold relief the rugged Laurentian bathed in sunlight and fills the mind with a sense of grandeur and loveliness."<sup>18</sup>

Certainly, most critics today would agree with the judgements expressed in the Globe and the Mail. Contemporary judgements, however, emphasize the balancing of the masses in the composition, the naturalistic handling and the play of light as the factors which contribute to the painting's success.<sup>19</sup>

Strangely, Sunrise on the Saguenay, the diploma piece submitted by Lucius O'Brien, did not receive extended coverage.<sup>20</sup> Comments on the painting, which were mildly critical, however, were polite, perhaps in deference to O'Brien's position as president of the new academy. The most in-depth comments on this painting were made by the Mail. Mentioning that O'Brien was the most popular painter at the exhibition, the critic went on to note:

Sunrise on the Saguenay is a noble example of nature in its colossal form. It is worked out with consummate care; indeed it is held by many that too much labour has been bestowed and that by toning down supposed coarseness, its force has been impaired. The result is however a charming picture although it is not the best of those exhibited from Mr. O'Brien's easel.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup>"The Art Exhibition," Mail, 24 May 1880.

<sup>19</sup>See: Reid, pp. 335-36.

<sup>20</sup>Reproduced in Appendix II.

<sup>21</sup>"Art in the Dominion," Mail, 8 March 1880.

The Globe reviewer suggested that, like the subject it represented, Sunrise on the Saguenay was a "great" painting which was practically indescribable.<sup>22</sup> Two months after the Academy exhibition, Sunrise on the Saguenay was exhibited at the Ontario Society of Artists exhibition and the Globe reviewer mentioned that it grew on the observer with repeated visits to the gallery.<sup>23</sup> The Globe's actual critical stance towards this painting, however, perhaps can be inferred from the comments made about its companion piece, Cape Trinity and Eternity. While the painting was described as a "beautiful" picture, the writer suggested that the treatment of the composition was not as "awe inspiring" as the subject matter would suggest:

The treatment is delicate and poetical, but somewhat softened down by distance and the misty atmosphere. The drawing is good and the colouring pleasing and harmonious but . . . the picture appears to lack that sullen grandeur which the subject would seem to demand.<sup>24</sup>

The critic suggested that while he could not go so far as to call the rendering "untruthful," he did feel it was more "poetical" than "descriptive."

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<sup>22</sup>Globe, 8 March 1880, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup>"Ontario Society of Artists," Globe, 19 May 1880, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup>"Academy of Arts," Globe, 9 March 1880, p. 304.

Indeed, O'Brien's grandiose depiction of the Saguenay is very subjective. The smooth handling that virtually eliminates the brush-stroke, the luminist lighting and the soft colours all contribute to the development of a somewhat romanticized landscape which down-plays the ruggedness of this terrain. Moreover, the large scale of the picture, as Dennis Reid has suggested, is a pictorial concept of the new federal vision that the Academy was to foster.<sup>25</sup>

It could be argued that the type of review accorded Fraser and O'Brien was based on their previously established reputation. As a comparison, therefore, we can look at the response to Homer Watson, an artist who was just beginning to become established in 1880. In 1878, Watson had exhibited for the first time with the Ontario Society of Artists. At the first Academy exhibition (1880), one of Watson's landscapes was selected by the Marquis of Lorne for the Royal collection. Watson also was elected an associate of the Academy that year. Two years later (1882) he would become a full member.<sup>26</sup>

Watson's well-known painting The Stone Road was exhibited at the Ontario Society of Artists exhibition in 1881.<sup>27</sup> An Ontario landscape, the painting has as its central focus a dirt road with a

<sup>25</sup>Reid, pp. 316-18.

<sup>26</sup>Harper, Early Painters and Engravers in Canada, p. 323.

<sup>27</sup>Reproduced in Appendix III.

wagon travelling down it. On the left mid-ground is a pasture with sheep grazing, while on the right there is a winding river, the opposite bank and a far-off vista. The painting was mentioned by reviewers in both the Globe and the Mail.

The Globe reviewer described The Stone Road as a "good" painting although he felt it could have been made better:

The Stone Road is a good specimen of a quiet western Ontario landscape. As a picture it could have been improved had less of the road been visible, but both it and the other objects are painted with singular fidelity the most striking quality of the painting is its perspective, which gives the picture great depth. The bed of the stream opens up a view of the distant landscape which seems to stretch away for a very great distance.<sup>28</sup>

The reviewer in the Mail was more enthusiastic about the work:

The Old Stone Rd [sic] is a capital picture. A turnpike road, running parallel to a stream, occupies the centre of the canvas, with the background filled in with fields broken by copses, the strong feature presented is the road which extends away in a straight line for a distance. Nothing could be more natural, with its sides covered with dusty turf. The whole landscape of which it is a portion is faithfully worked out; there is nothing flimsy or showy, but everything tells.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>"Ontario Society of Artists," Globe, 14 May 1881, p. 17.

<sup>29</sup>"Ontario Art and Artists," Mail, 11 May 1881, p. 8.

Both reviewers have perceived that the road is central to the design of the composition. They have similarly both noted how Watson has given each detail its importance although neither reviewer particularizes them. Moreover, the writers seem to realize that perspective plays an unusual role in the composition. What they have failed to convey is just how the composition works.

In terms of stylistic analysis, neither reviewer has been able to explain completely the design principles which make the painting so successful. For example, neither notices the fact that the small buggy is out of proportion with the rest of the picture. Yet because it is a dark object almost centrally placed in the composition and set against a dramatically lighted spot in the road, it arrests the viewer's attention. Similarly, while the eye is led into the composition by the winding road itself, its sudden disappearance by the mass of trees at the perspective point forces the eye back to the buggy.

The strengths of such reviews were in their descriptive power. In a few lines individual paintings were depicted and particularized in language which was often somewhat poetic in its evocative power.

Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly carried a review of the first Academy exhibition. Unfortunately, neither Laurentian Splendour nor Sunrise on the Saguenay were singled out for comment. However, an

indication of the critical level of this review can be adduced from the general comments made about the works of Fraser and O'Brien. The writer, who declined to make any evaluative judgements based on the principle that every painter has his admirers, stated:

Who for instance shall choose between these lovely creations of Mr. O'Brien's . . . in which the real is carried to the verge of the ideal, without, however, overstepping the limits, and these others of Mr. Fraser's, whose glow and warmth are a thing to be seen, not described? It has been said that of these two, the former paints always with a view to the effect of his picture on the mind of the beholder; the latter only with the endeavour to represent what he sees as it affects him. We do not know; and can but express unqualified admiration of both their styles.

The Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly reviewer did permit himself "one little" word of dispraise" concerning O'Brien's "marine" paintings:

What is it in the flecks of foam and bursts of spray . . . that somehow fails to please the eye? Is it the quality which we think we have heard called 'woolliness'? Yet the poet speaks of 'the white and fleecy waves looking soft as carded wool'; so that perhaps, would be no defect. It is rather a certain stiffness and flatness, not easily described. . . . 30

Although the reviewer did not single any canvases out by name, O'Brien's four major paintings in the exhibition could all be termed

<sup>30</sup>"A Gossip About the First Dominion Art Exhibition," Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, 4 (May 1880), 545-54.

marine pieces, so presumably Sunrise on the Saguenay and Capes Trinity and Eternity were included in this discussion.

Characterized by genteel insipidness, this review is perhaps one of the worst which appeared in Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly. Interestingly, the author prevented any evaluation of his comments in the pseudonym he chose: "An Unlearned Visitor." At the same time, however, he emphasized his familiarity with a wide variety of European and British painters, critics and writers so it can be adduced that the pseudonym was adopted as a mock gesture of humility on the part of one who saw himself as a cosmopolitan.

A more usual review appeared two months later in response to the annual exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists. Less supercilious than the former, it still emphasized a close familiarity with the British art scene.<sup>31</sup>

On the whole, newspapers carried little extended criticism of individual paintings or painters. Reviews mentioned a large number of paintings briefly rather than a few at length. These reviews, however, exhibit a number of characteristic attitudes which are cumulatively perhaps of more importance than the individual comments extended to any one work. Moreover, these attitudes were similar to those we have seen exhibited towards literature.

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<sup>31</sup>"The Ontario Art Society's Exhibition," Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, 5 (July 1880), 98-100.

Although there is no direct analogy to the Confederation poets in the field of painting, there are correlations between painting and literature in the type of subject matter and underlying attitudes which prevailed. As we have seen, descriptive nature poetry was critically acclaimed because it was thought to provide the basis for a national school of poetry. Topographical landscape was similarly warmly received by the reviewers as the distinguishing feature of a national school in painting.

Painters who chose Canadian landscape subjects for their canvases were warmly received by newspaper reviewers. In 1880, for example, the Mail commended both the subjects and modes of treatment of paintings in the Ontario Society of Artists Exhibition. The subjects and treatment were not only "broader" and "bolder," but they were "more national" in character. Canadian artists were "endeavouring to depict our magnificent landscapes and coast scenery."<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, the Mail suggested that Canadian artists should follow the example of American painters in portraying the distinctive features of their country. The diploma pieces exhibited by A.A. Edson, J.A. Fraser, Lucius O'Brien and Henry Sandham were particularly noted as examples of distinctive Canadian landscape subject matter: "Their very national character enhances their value

<sup>32</sup>"The Art Exhibition," Mail, 24 May 1880.



as part of a national collection. Let our artists put forth their powers in endeavouring, as their American brethren are doing, to produce works which have a distinct character and native face."<sup>33</sup>

Throughout the 1880s, painters would be commended repeatedly for delineating Canadian landscapes. With the completion of the trans-continental railway in 1885, the north west and the Pacific coast became more accessible to eastern Canada. And, thanks to a promotional scheme instituted by Van Horne, artists received free passes on the railway to portray the magnificent scenery of western Canada. Rocky Mountain and west coast landscapes became an increasing feature of exhibitions in the latter half of the 1880s. For example, out of 320 paintings displayed at the 1888 combined exhibition of the Academy and the Society, held in Toronto, more than fifty were western landscapes.<sup>34</sup>

Newspaper reviewers responded enthusiastically to these mountain and west coast landscapes exhibited in 1888. While they might differ on the merits of individual paintings, the Globe, the Mail and the Empire all agreed that the best feature of the present exhibition was the depiction of the Rockies, and the west coast. As the Mail put it: "A new and striking country has recently been

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<sup>33</sup>Mail, 24 May 1880.

<sup>34</sup>Catalogue, 1888 Combined Exhibition Royal Canadian Academy of Arts and Ontario Society of Artists, held in Toronto.

opened up and a troupe of topographical artists, led by Mr. O'Brien, have availed themselves of the advantages of the CPR to explore and delineate the great features of the Rocky Mountains."<sup>35</sup> According to the Globe, the result of focussing so much attention on Canadian landscape could not help but have a "salutary effect on both home and foreign markets—to put it commercially; to encourage native painters, enabling young Canada to form A SCHOOL OF HER OWN." The Globe added, however, that the large number of western landscapes needed "scattering" through individual purchases.<sup>36</sup>

In contrast to the enthusiasm of the newspaper reviewers, the Week's art critic felt there were far too many mountain landscapes and their admission reflected no credit to Canadian art. "The admirability of mountains as a pictorial element, is associated with art in its infancy. New York has outgrown Bierstadt as Paris has long since outgrown Calame."<sup>37</sup> Western landscapes declined in number and prominence in the exhibitions of the 1890s. Canadian subject matter in general, however, remained a focal point for reviewers.

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<sup>35</sup>"Canadian Art," Mail, 18 May 1888, p. 14.

<sup>36</sup>"The Art Exhibition," Globe, 8 May 1888, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup>"Art and Music," Week, 24 May 1888, p. 417.

Certainly, the newspapers continued to praise artists who depicted Canadian landscapes or Canadian genre subjects. In 1891, for example, the Globe stated:

It must be exceedingly gratifying to every lover of art to observe at this year's exhibition . . . an increased tendency of the artists to depict Canadian scenery, to portray Canadian customs, to delineate Canadian subjects. . . . On the walls of the academy, you see Canadian water . . . Canadian landscapes, lofty mountain, secluded valley, fertile plain; Canadian architecture, rustic and classical; trees of the finest, skies of the bluest, clouds dark and gloomy, soft and fleecy; Canadian pastimes, hunting, boating, fishing, and Canadian toilers at their arduous labours.<sup>38</sup>

By the 1890s, art exhibitions contained a large number of canvases which both featured elements of French academic art and the influence of other French methods, such as impressionism. A number of Canadian painters including William Brymner, Harriet Ford, G.A. Reid, Robert Harris and Paul Peel studied in France in the 1870s and 1880s. They returned to Canada with the techniques of the French academy. As long as these painters utilized their training to portray Canadian subject matter, the reviewers commended them. However, when foreign subject matter was combined with foreign techniques, Canadian painters were criticised.

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<sup>38</sup>"Canadian Academy of Art," Globe, 14 March 1891, p. 1.

This is dramatically exemplified in a review of the 1895 exhibition. The Globe praised the work of such artists as Brymner, Hammond, Harris, O'Brien and Watson. Mentioning that their paintings formed the nucleus of a national art, the writer suggested that, like Dutch artists, these men had been true to their country because they had portrayed it on canvas. Conversely, the Globe challenged the assumption that art, being cosmopolitan, was not bound to any country:

If our Canadian artists would use their European experience merely as a basis to build individual works of merit upon, and would not—making the excuse, that art, being cosmopolitan, is therefore not bound to any country—practice their imitations and plagiarism, there would be a more hopeful outlook. In order to be pioneers of a national Canadian art they must absorb our national life. [This is] true practically as well as spiritually. Rembrandt was a genuine Dutchman, not only in his artistic work. The activity, love of liberty, emotional depth and simplicity of the Dutch character reflect strongly in Rembrandt's work, and these are qualities which Canadian art of today needs. And it is from the Dutch school that can best be learned lessons that will be of value to Canadian artists, not Paris, where so many clever American painters have lost their nationality in having adopted French technique and subject, which no matter how splendidly they may paint, separates them entirely from a part in the national art progress of their country.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>"Royal Canadian Academy," Globe, 18 April 1895, p. 2.

The reference to American painters is particularly notable. These painters had been earlier suggested as an example for Canada to follow. However, as American art no longer portrayed distinctive American themes, it was now an example to be avoided.

The Globe's sentiments regarding the influence of French methods was echoed in other Toronto newspapers. At different times, both the Telegram and the News questioned whether European training actually resulted in a diminution of an artist's originality. The News, for example, stated in 1893:

It is a query . . . whether many of the artists who have travelled abroad have received any lasting benefit, for some since their return paint with much less vigor and strength and others unfortunately have lost all the individuality they ever had, by merely endeavouring to copy some particular school, some prevailing style, or a noted master of whom they are but a dismal and faint echo.<sup>40</sup>

Several years earlier, the Telegram had stressed the difficulties which arose from the "inapplicability of French method to the landscapes and surroundings incidental to our national life."<sup>41</sup>

In a review of the 1895 Academy exhibition for the Week, Harriet Ford responded to the criticisms that Canadian art was becoming "Europeanized." Ford, a painter who had studied in Europe herself, was one of the painters to whom such comments

<sup>40</sup>"With Brushes and Palettes," News, 6 May 1893, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup>"A Look at the Pictures," Telegram, 18 May 1885, p. 1.

were directed. Arguing that all art is convention, she wrote:

... it seems to me, a cause of rejoicing that the present exhibition is hung by works of Canadians, young men and women most of them, who have gone abroad with all their faculties receptive and open: ready to assimilate whatever convention or method is most suited to their needs, and have brought it back for the encouragement and stimulation of future artists and opening up a channel for the circulation of the hopes and aspirations, the striving, struggling, experimenting, achieving, which is electric current in the great art centres.<sup>42</sup>

In some ways, Ford's argument is analogous to the literary critics writing in the Week. They praised Roberts, and Lampman because their poetry was comparable to the works of the established British tradition. Here, Ford has suggested that the importation of European conventions will help to create the atmosphere of a great art centre within Canada.

Conversely, the newspapers argued that the wholesale importation of French methods resulted in a provincial art. True creativity resulted from the development and portrayal of an identity that was local and national, rather than cosmopolitan. Again the argument was similar to that in the literary reviews where the newspapers castigated writers for creating imitations of foreign literature. Just as a Canadian writer was to write from

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<sup>42</sup>"Exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy," 26 April 1895, pp. 521-22.

his observation of life around him, so was a painter to depict his visual experiences on canvas.

It could be argued that this was a rather parochial stance and that it reveals just how complacent and Philistine the newspapers were. Be that as it may. At the same time it should not be assumed that this meant writers in the dailies were totally unaware of currents in the art centres of Europe. On the contrary, it is surprising to see just how small the time lag is.

Awareness of international currents is best illustrated in the response to Impressionism revealed in newspaper reviews. In the introduction to a 1974 exhibition of Canadian impressionists, Joan Murray wrote that as an art form, Impressionism appeared very late in Canada:

Canadian artists adopted Impressionism considerably later than French painters—approximately six years after the group exhibitions in Paris had ended. Its first appearance in this country occurred in the mid-1890s in the work of such artists as Lucius O'Brien, who probably felt the impact of Impressionism through the influence of artists in the United States with whom he may have been in contact. In 1895 O'Brien painted an Impressionist canvas called Towing Barges on the Hudson River. . . .<sup>43</sup>

While a true impressionist canvas may not have appeared until the mid-nineties, awareness of the technique and of the term itself

<sup>43</sup>Impressionism in Canada: 1895-1935 (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1974), pp. 9-10.

appears in newspaper reviews from about 1883 onward. The term Impressionism had been coined in 1874 as a derisive response to an independent exhibition of young French artists held in Paris that year. Between 1874 and 1886, the Impressionists held eight group exhibitions. By 1886, French critics and a large segment of the public accepted the Impressionists as a serious group of artists.<sup>44</sup> From 1883 onward, newspaper reviews in Toronto reveal an increasing knowledge of the work of this group although a less than half-hearted acceptance of Impressionist methods.

Two reviews in the Globe of the combined Academy and Society exhibition held in Toronto in 1885 utilized the term Impressionist to describe the work of several Canadian painters. In the first review, the writer described paintings by Otto Jacobi and F. H. Smith, a visiting exhibitor, as Impressionist. While the level of critical evaluation contained in the comments is undistinguished, the review reveals what the author understood to be the methods of impressionism and how he responded to it:

Jacobi's pictures . . . are evidently painted according to a standard of his own, and without reference to any ordinary rules of art. 'An Autumn Idyl' for instance to the ordinary unaesthetic observer seems a thing of dabs and blotches—probably however, there is a subtle suggestiveness in it which has been entirely overlooked. There is

<sup>44</sup>Helen Gardner, Art Through The Ages, 6th ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., 1975), pp. 692-99.



plenty of colour in it—red-blue and green and yellow—but apparently laid on at random, but to paraphrase Lincoln's remark about Artemus Ward's lecture: 'To those who like this kind of picture, it will be just the kind of picture they like.'

The Globe continued that Mr. F.H. Smith of New York "is ANOTHER IMPRESSIONIST but there is a good deal more method and clearness in his work."<sup>45</sup>

It is evident that the reviewer associated Impressionism with the use of colour, although he did not broaden this to include the use of light itself. There is also an indication that the author was uneasy about the lack of clarity in the works he mentioned. In his distaste for the inexact and the subtle, however, the reviewer was simply projecting a widespread Victorian attitude.<sup>46</sup>

A second Globe review of this same exhibition again utilized the term Impressionist to discuss a painting by W. Blair Bruce entitled A Summer Afternoon. These comments reveal what the reviewer saw as the limitation of Impressionism:

A Summer Afternoon . . . embodies to the full the merits and defects of the modern impressionist school, the landscape being presented

<sup>45</sup>"The Art Exhibition," Globe, 25 May 1883, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup>As Richard Altick remarks: "Subtlety and indirection were not highly valued in Victorian art, because they delayed and confused rather than assisted the beholder's response. . . . They wanted to be addressed directly, on a single unambiguous level of communication." Victorian People and Ideas (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973), p. 278.

by broad sweeps of colour, and details being almost ignored. The idea of expansiveness, brightness, and luxuriance of vegetation is conveyed by the masses of colour, but the picture has none of those minor but frequently telling points of suggestiveness which so often supply the principal interest in painting.<sup>47</sup>

The Globe was not the only newspaper which reveals an awareness of impressionism at this period. The World also indicated some understanding of the movement in the context of remarks about A.A. Edson. The writer expressed the hope that Edson's originality had not been affected by his recent residence abroad for he added that his two exhibition pictures "smack very much of an impression from the popular painter Corot."<sup>48</sup>

While neither Jacobi nor Edson can be termed Impressionists, both had rather innovative approaches to the use of colour and light in the 1880s. Thus, these reviewers were not too far from the mark when they linked the work of these men with the Impressionists.<sup>49</sup>

The general attitude to paintings which utilized impressionist techniques is indicated by a 1885 Telegram review of William

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<sup>47</sup>"The Art Exhibition," Globe, 26 May 1883, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup>"Royal Canadian Academy," World, 24 May 1883, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup>In an 1888 review, the Mail also described Jacobi as an Impressionist. See: "Canadian Art," Mail, 19 May 1888, p. 14.

Brymner's A Wreath of Flowers.<sup>50</sup> As Patricia Godsell has pointed out, this painting combines elements of academic painting with those of impressionism. The simple genre subject-matter of little girls seated on a hillside playing with flowers on a summer's day is enhanced by the large scale of the canvas. The details of the foreground are carefully defined. The midground of the canvas, however, is suggested in a more impressionistic manner and colour is blended in a broad pattern of light and space.<sup>51</sup> The Telegram's review of the painting noted this combination of elements somewhat critically:

A Wreath of Flowers . . . [is] a large, square, rather empty canvas. Space is a desirable element in a composition; in this instance it is overdone by about twelve inches of superfluous foreground. This we believe is the vogue in Paris just now. To the native eye also the key in which it is painted is too low. The grass weeds and hillside are well drawn, but have no value in the absence of light and shade, and variety in the handling. The consequence is that the foreground does not come forward enough, and the picture is rather flat. The figures are finely drawn, but are open to the same objection. However it is a sincere, good picture; its faults are only those of a school, not indigonus [sic] to this country.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Reproduced in Appendix IV.

<sup>51</sup> Enjoying Canadian Painting (Don Mills, Ont.: General Publishing Co. Ltd., 1976), p. 97.

<sup>52</sup> "A Look at the Pictures," Telegram, 18 May 1885, p. 1.

On the whole, the methods of French academic painting were more palatable than those of Impressionism, particularly when these were applied to figurative paintings or Canadian genre scenes.

The World, for example, highly praised a painting by William Cruickshank entitled Hauling a Mast, which was exhibited in the 1884

Ontario Society of Artists exhibition:

This is the most important figure composition that we remember to have seen in Toronto. It is the first picture really characteristic of Canadian life in one of its most striking phases painted in Canada and by a Canadian artist, that has arrived at so high a plane of technical excellence and historical truth. It is replete with difficult grouping and drawing, which is handled in a way that shows the artist to be completely master of the anatomy of horse and man, and a stern adherent to truth. There is, however, a lack of quality, which cannot be attained without continued reference to nature as she is out-of-doors. The leading horses and their rider are 'taking it easy' as the spar is coming downhill, the labor of handling it falls upon those who are nearer to it, and these are rather a reserved force. It is easy to see that the artist loves his subject. . . . <sup>53</sup>

The reviewer lamented that the small prices a work such as Hauling a Mast would bring prevented Canadian artists from doing more thorough work. Using as an example, the meticulous work of the French academic painter Ernest Meissonier (1815-1890), the writer suggested that Meissonier would keep such a subject upon

<sup>53</sup>"The Palette and Brush," World, 17 May 1884, p. 1.

his easel for two years.. Cruikshank was counselled to do likewise. The World felt more time on individual canvases was all that was needed to develop Cruikshank's talent to its fullest.<sup>54</sup>

Conversely, artists who blatantly mass-produced paintings were criticised. In this same article, the World deplored the spirit which seemed to animate Robert Harris. They saw it as one of mere "production." Stating that Harris had produced more work in the past year than perhaps any Canadian artist had in a comparative length of time, the World suggested that Harris had "depended on startling and abrupt effects rather than any real or admirable sentiment." They questioned whether this course was followed "from a barrenness of invention, or haste to be rich enough to follow the muse more at ease remains to be seen in his future productions. The past would suggest a doubt."<sup>55</sup>

Contemporary criticisms of Harris' work today emphasize that his paintings vary greatly in merit. Many of Harris' portraits exhibit competence, but are repetitious and uninspired.<sup>56</sup>

On the one hand, newspaper critics condemned the production of paintings merely for market consumption; on the other, critics

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<sup>54</sup>This is also another example of the labour versus reward equation discussed in Chapter III. World, 17 May 1884, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup>World, 17 May 1884, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup>Harper, Painting in Canada, p. 213.

suggested that painters should vary their subject matter and aspire to higher standards of achievement. In a review of the 1890 Ontario Society of Artists exhibition, the Mail, for example, noted that the exhibition contained a "preponderance of landscape subjects" and a dearth of other types of subject matter:

There are not many portraits, and with the exception of Mr. Reid's two larger pictures and one of two others, there is not a great deal that touches at all a high mark in the way of figure painting. Nor are there . . . studies in the nude. Here and there are pictures which appeal rather to the student of art than to the general public, and which show that the free spirit of originality and experiment are not altogether wanting among us, but for the most part the pictures keep within the prescribed limits of conventional treatment which has been found by experience to suit the market.<sup>57</sup>

Since Canada had established her own academy, it is not surprising that the suggested types of subject matter were based on those of the European academies. While the general types of subject matter were academic, the particulars were to be Canadian. For example, in the previous quotation from the Mail, G.A. Reid's canvases were mentioned. These were The Mortgaging of the Homestead and The Other Side of the Question; both  canvases which utilized academic principles to portray Canadian situations.

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<sup>57</sup>"Colours and Brushes," Mail, 4 June 1890, p. 5.

Moreover, acceptance of academy standards enabled newspaper reviewers to promote subjects that were taboo in puritanical Toronto. This is particularly true in the case of nude studies. While studies from the nude were an accepted part of the European academic curriculum, they were almost unheard of in late Victorian Toronto. Thus, in accepting the curriculum of the Academy, reviewers emphasized the need for unclothed models. Thus the 1890 Mail review remarked upon the absence of such studies in the exhibition. Earlier, an 1882 editorial in the World had pointed out that Canada had not achieved any success in the field of historical painting and attributed this lack to the absence of nude study classes. The article continued: "This is a deficiency, which we expect to see soon remedied, and then we hope to see native painters delineating the beauties of the human figure with as much accuracy and success as they now portray on canvas the grandeurs and charms of Canadian scenery."<sup>58</sup>

First, last, and always, the newspapers promoted the development of painting as a development which would characterize the emerging nation. They applauded any improvement in the standards of painting as a reflection of the progress and talent of Canada. In reviewing the Canadian art contribution to the 1886 Colonial Exhibition, held in London, England, the Mail, for example, sug-

<sup>58</sup> "Progress of Art," Editorial, World, 7 Sept. 1882.

gested that in the other colonial exhibits works of distinctive merit often turned out to be the product of talent developed outside the adopted country. The writer continued that this was not the case with the Canadian exhibit: "Most of its leading artists are born and bred Canadians, while such Academicians as . . . Homer Watson and Bell-Smith have found material and possibilities enough and to spare, without crossing the Atlantic, and even in their own immediate neighbourhood."<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, the Globe noted of the 1886 Royal Canadian Academy exhibition: "Its strength and weaknesses is [sic] its own. It is without a foreign element, and the national progress in art can be noted."<sup>60</sup>

In contrast, the Week's often gloomy predictions on the development of Canadian painting paralleled Goldwin Smith's pessimistic outlook on the country itself:

Canadian Art . . . suffers like other Canadian productions of the highest class from narrowness of area. A province is attempting to do and to support that which can only be done or supported by a nation. Canada is a political expression. For the purposes of art, as for those of literature, commerce and society, the country is really Ontario with the British part of Montreal. . . . It is not a reason against doing what we can, but it is a reason

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<sup>59</sup>"Colonial Exhibition," Mail, 1 July 1886, p. 6.

<sup>60</sup>"Art in Canada," Globe, 8 Feb. 1886, p. 2.



for moderating our expectations and criticizing what is really little more than a Provincial Exhibition as though it contained the art of a nation.<sup>61</sup>

The stance of periodical writers on the status of Canadian painting was similar to that of periodical reviewers on the status of Canadian literature. Reviewers in the periodicals either patronized Canadian art, expected it to be a reflection of the European art world or, disappointed at what they considered its slow progress, blamed its deficiencies on the political ambiguities of the country. When periodical reviewers attempted to promote Canadian art, their enthusiasm often forced them to either overpraise works or abdicate the role of critic in refusing to discriminate among the many "gems."

Newspaper reviewers had less arcane pretensions. They merely wanted painting to reflect the country. As such, they were able to accept both the strengths and weaknesses of Canadian painting. Newspaper reviewers criticised when they felt artists' works were not reflecting the country and praised them when they did. Newspaper reviewers patiently awaited the development of a national school. In the meantime, their reviews were characterized by a reasoned acceptance of the actual achievements of Canadian painting up to that date.

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<sup>61</sup>"Mahlstick," "The Royal Academy," Week, 2 May 1885, pp. 390-91.

## CHAPTER VI

### PHILISTINES AND PHARISEES: THE REFLECTION OF CRITICAL STANDARDS AND TASTE IN THE DAILIES

Where there is little art one must make great allowance, and in a city of incongruous architecture and inconsistent morality [Toronto], too much 'taste' cannot be expected.

Arcturus 1887.<sup>1</sup>

It is hardly surprising that periodical writers viewed the Canadian public as Philistine. The pronouncements of this small coterie of individuals reached only a small segment of the reading public as publishing figures and recurrent failures testified. They, no doubt, felt a paranoid sense of lack of appreciation. What is unexpected is that the newspapers did not share this pessimistic view of the innate sensibilities of Canadians. The newspapers were concerned with the broad development of aesthetic attitudes. Writers in the dailies, however, viewed this as a dual process: the public's taste would only be educated as the actual standard of creative output improved, and as the quality of critical reviews of these works improved.

Once again, comparison of attitudes in the newspapers with those in the periodicals is instructive, particularly as writers in the periodicals contended that the newspapers were responsible for

<sup>1</sup>E. E. Burroughs (Sarepta), "An Hour at the Educational Museum," Arcturus, 1 (May 7, 1887).

much of Ontario's philistinism. Sara Jeannette Duncan's 1886 indictment of the newspapers, for example, claimed they contained: "no social topics of other than merely local interest, no scientific, artistic or literary discussions, no broad consideration of matters of national interest."<sup>2</sup> She was not alone in her views.

George Munro Grant, principal of Queen's University, felt a public which relied on newspapers for its reading matter was without question Philistine. In an 1893 lament for the "Anti-National Features of the National Policy," published in the Canadian Magazine, he wrote that the government had not been moved to remove the tariff on imported books because the "government knows that Canadians do not read books. The great body of voters are satisfied with newspapers. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Although Munro would have been loath to admit it, perhaps the public was "satisfied" with the newspapers, because their quality was relatively high and because they provided a fairly accurate mirror of national consciousness.

In any case, a comparison of material in Toronto newspapers with that contained in periodicals could provide an answer to the underlying question posed in the title of this thesis. Were the newspapers and their readers indeed the total Philistines that

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<sup>2</sup>"Saunterings," Week, 30 Sept. 1886, pp. 707-08.

<sup>3</sup>"Anti-National Features of the National Policy," Canadian Magazine, 1 (March, 1893), 9-13.

the periodical writers made them out to be? Conversely, did the periodicals themselves provide an accurate reflection of aesthetic taste in Toronto and English-speaking Canada during the 1880s and 1890s.

Certainly, critics in the periodicals saw themselves as Matthew Arnold's "saving remnant." In their view, they were the guardians and nurturers of a culture which the Philistine masses were either too ignorant or too materialistic to appreciate. As one critic in the Week stated:

Canadians assume a variety of attitudes toward their own authors. . . . The host are . . . ignorant and apathetic. But it need not be questioned that while the majority have either no opinion, or opinions that anyone less sensitive than a poet would ignore with amusement, the saving minority regard them with grateful affection and enforced admiration; judge their work at its average or its best; criticize them with a due consideration of the abominable and desperate circumstance in which they find themselves; pity, not them, but the country which has so little to inspire them; and advise them to continue with what hope they can muster of brighter days and happier recognition.<sup>4</sup>

On another occasion, an author in the Week wrote:

7 Our people in these times are so much under the domination of material interests, and above all, are so engrossed in the traffic of politics, that anything that appeals to the higher nature of man or contributes in any degree to the elevation and refinement of the popular taste is apt to be coldly received, if not utterly disregarded.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>M.F. Libbey, "Canadian Literature," Week, 3 March 1893, pp. 318-19.

<sup>5</sup>"Topics of the Week," Week, 22 May 1884, p. 385.

Such writers believed that, in general, the attitudes of Canadian society were inimical both to the development of the arts and to the cultivation of their own tastes and sensibilities. Critics in the periodicals assumed an air of superiority as the "saving minority," an air which removed them from the society they described.

However, in his study "Literary Attitudes in Canada 1880-1900," T.G. MacLulich has indicated that the pose of cultural loftiness assumed by writers in the periodicals was in itself a manifestation of the Philistine personality. If the Canadian public was on the whole an audience of Philistines, it was logical that the periodical critics who wrote for this audience would themselves have elements of this Philistine mentality. MacLulich has both defined the Philistine personality and has shown how the periodical writers revealed aspects of it. However, because his study was limited to periodicals, MacLulich has assumed that these critics were merely reflecting traits which were by and large universally held. He has suggested that the periodical critics were a part of the Philistine problem they described.<sup>6</sup> Research into the dailies has led me to conclude that the periodical critics were not so much a part of the problem as much as the problem was one which they themselves had invented.

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<sup>6</sup>"Literary Attitudes in Central Canada 1880-1900," p. 148.

In order to understand the different attitudes to taste revealed in the newspapers, it is necessary to both define the term Philistine and to provide a portrait of the traits attributed to this characteristic type. Figuratively, since early in the nineteenth century, the term has been applied to people deficient in literary culture, people whose interests tend to be materialistic and commonplace. Just as the Philistines were the enemy of the chosen people the Israelites, these types become the enemy of those actively engaged in cultural pursuits. Matthew Arnold, who popularized the term, actually divided society into three categories: the Barbarians (the upper classes); the Philistines (the middle classes); and the Populace (the working classes). His greatest wrath was reserved for the culture-hating Philistines and his largest praise was bestowed on those few aliens who believed in the virtues of culture and, thus, were the "saving remnant."<sup>7</sup>

In her columns for the Week, Sara Jeannette Duncan not only castigated the citizens of Ontario as one "giant camp of the Philistines," and as the "imported essence of British Philistinism" but she went on to characterize the distinguishing traits of the Philistine mentality.<sup>8</sup> Duncan utilized the term "Maoris" to describe the

<sup>7</sup> Culture and Anarchy, ed. Ian Gregor (Indianapolis, Minn.: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1971), pp. 83-90.

<sup>8</sup> "Saunterings," Week, 30 Sept. 1886, pp. 707-08 and 20 Jan. 1887, pp. 120-21.

provincial philistinism of Canadians, a philistinism which she believed arose from a particular set of values: materialism, complacency, a lack of tradition, democracy and respectability.<sup>9</sup>

Using Duncan's characterization of the Maoris as a basis, MacLulich isolated the peculiar traits of the Philistine, providing a useful conceptual framework:

A Philistine is materialistic and pragmatic in outlook: he measures personal worth according to one's possessions and power in society. He is eminently respectable, which means he regulates his behaviour according to what he thinks other people consider correct, not according to his convictions. He practises the socially approved virtues, and makes sure these are well-known. His vices, if any, are minor or well hidden. He probably has no hidden virtues. He is very moral, but his morality is a piece with his respectability: that is, he is good because other people expect him to be good, and he is only as good as they expect—no better. As long as his own morality is not called into question, he is willing to admit . . . that other people are immoral, or that the times as a whole are immoral. Whether utopia is placed in the past, present, or future is not a contentious issue with him, so long as he can believe that he personally is better than he has ever been. He may think society is just fine as it is, or he may feel it is going rapidly downhill, but no matter what he thinks about society in general, in his own life he is conservative; he resists all changes to his habits and ideas.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>"The Maori," Week, 22 July 1886, pp. 547-48.

<sup>10</sup>MacLulich, pp. 148-49.

MacLulich also noted that the Philistine's opinions about literature were based either on recognized authorities or were an extension of his personal social code. The Philistine desired a type of literature which confirmed his values and presented a stable, righteous world. An actual interest in literary matters may have even been a part of his appropriate station in life, a symbol of his respectability.<sup>11</sup> Essentially then, while critics in the periodicals viewed themselves as the "saving minority" they were actually revealing their own Philistine mentality.

The negative attitudes toward the cultural capacities of the rest of Canadian society held by periodical critics were not shared by writers in the dailies. Newspaper articles frequently asserted that the cultivation of the arts was a natural part of the evolution of a civilization from a pioneer society to a nation. In this light, Canada could be proud of her achievements to date. An editorial in the World devoted to the "Progress of Art" described this process in terms which Sir Kenneth Clark himself might have used:

The progress of a nation from the wigwam to the palace is marked by the cultivation of art. In primitive times works of necessity are of more importance than works of art, but as wealth accumulates and with it refinement, man's innate love of ornament calls for the productions of the painter's brush and the sculptor's chisel. Judged by this standard Canada need not be ashamed. It is within . . .

<sup>11</sup> MacLulich, pp. 149-50.



living memory... when a native artist was unknown; but at the present day we have a host of talent that we may well be proud of. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Writers in the newspapers not only questioned whether the actual state of cultural development was at as low an ebb as the periodicals suggested, but they expressed a far higher opinion of the public's innate aesthetic sensibilities than that displayed by the periodicals. An 1884 editorial in the Globe entitled "Canadian Literature" stated:

Every now and then there is a lamentation raised over the sad condition of literary taste and culture in Canada. Things, it seems, are in this respect already very bad and are threatening to become very much worse. . . . It is best to begin by enquiring if it is actually the fact that all the evils indicated are coming upon poor Canada, or have already come. It is never to be forgotten that this country is but a young one, that it has been settled, improved, and made what it is chiefly by very poor but very industrious men and women, and that these have in the first place had a great struggle to live at all, without bothering their heads much about 'culture' or anything that word is supposed to imply. It is also notorious that these poor pioneers and subjugators of the soil have always had in the midst of their [illegible] 'bookshelf,' and have been on the whole a shrewd, thoughtful and reading sort of people. . . . Ah but it may be said that when we speak of culture and literature we leave such out of the count. Well be it so. The same law which rules out the farmer, rules out the mechanic and the shop-keeper, and then what have you left?<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>"Progress of Art," Editorial, World, 7 Sept. 1882.

<sup>13</sup>"Canadian Literature," Editorial, Globe, 18 June 1884,

The Globe editorial stated that they refused to believe the argument that Canadians were not readers and that literature was on the decline. If Canadian literary products were not selling, it was the writers themselves who were to blame for producing dull work: "There is no reason in the world why Canadians should buy a dull book or a dozen of such . . . simply because these are the products of Canadian brains and Canadian workmanship." Pointing out that Canadian books of any intrinsic merit had always received a good response from the public, the Globe concluded their editorial with a ringing challenge:

Has Canada produced any one singer or any one prophet or any one maker of any kind who has not been appreciated and has not had his productions bought quite as much as could reasonably have been expected—nay, quite as upon the whole the verdict of posterity will say they deserved. If so, where are such to be seen? And what are their names?<sup>14</sup>

In 1894, the Mail reported that both the large attendances at art exhibitions and the large sale of art reproductions were signs that the aesthetic taste of the public had developed greatly. Answering the common charge that the voice of the crowd "vox populi" was worthless in art matters, the writer asserted that the crowd was better educated and more discerning than it had been years ago: "And . . . if the average crowd of decently intelligent people, after

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<sup>14</sup>Globe, 18 June 1884, p. 4.

reading a poem or looking at a picture, see absolutely nothing in it, there cannot be an overflowing amount of beauty or vitality in it to see." Perhaps, in anticipation of the argument that such types were merely Philistines who wanted instant gratification without the necessity of any intellectual effort, the writer went on to state that most people might be said "to possess a rudimentary palate which enables them to taste the picturesque or the poetical, though not perhaps to understand all the richness of their beauty."<sup>15</sup> Aesthetic education would only improve these innate tastes.

Aesthetic education both for creative artists and the public alike, provided much of the editorial impetus for a Toronto art gallery throughout the 1880s and 1890s. It was argued that the artists needed to view works of the masters as a stimulus to self-criticism and self-improvement, while a permanent art gallery was needed to educate the people in art matters. As the Globe stated in an 1895 editorial: "There is even now a large art loving public that requires only to be stimulated by constant and ready association with art works of undoubted merit. These works are in themselves an education and tend greatly to improve the ideas and refine the tastes of a people."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>"Popular Art," Editorial, Mail, 16 May 1894, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup>"A Provincial Art Gallery," Editorial, Globe, 24 Sept. 1895, p. 4.

'According to the Globe, the education value of a good art gallery was equal to that of the learning gleaned in public schools. The writer declared, however, that there was a direct relationship between the class of work to which the public was exposed and the level of aesthetic taste that resulted. While mediocre art or "pot-boilers" conveyed no advantages to the ordinary man, the works of genius appealed even "to the most primitive capacity in art matters."<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, the Mail had written that the elitist notion that the fine arts were only within the realm of the wealthy had yielded to the conviction that they actually had a great deal to do "with the daily bread of the masses of the people." Mentioning the necessity for good design in manufacturing and city beautification, the writer admitted that conditions among the masses were not conducive to art appreciation. The nature of their work, their narrow homes and prosaic surroundings were all barriers to the development of taste.<sup>18</sup> Hence the need for an art gallery.

Toronto newspapers not only denied charges that the public were philistine. Some even suggested that a genuine litterateur was more likely to be found within these so-called unliterary ranks than within the educated classes. The Globe mentioned that the readings

<sup>17</sup>Globe, 24 Sept. 1895, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup>"Popular Art Teaching," Mail, 15 Aug. 1890, p. 4.

and aspirations of this latter group had resulted in creative material for literary teaparties, but the songs and stories that emanated from the labouring groups were evidence of a healthy creative impulse at work among the populace: "Depend upon it, the people are as much alive as any other people in the world, and the long awaited Canadian literary genius may be evolved from their ranks any day."<sup>19</sup>

In a similar vein, the News and the World regularly published the work of Robert Kernighan ("The Khan"). Their support was, no doubt, due to the fact that Kernighan's homely verse was rooted in the social fabric of Ontario. Such positive attitudes were a long way from Duncan's assertion that the lack of Canadian books was due to the practical nature of Ontarians who had "neither time nor the inclination for stargazing."<sup>20</sup>

Contrary to the contentions of critics in the periodicals, there were a number of indications of a growing appreciation for painting and literature. At one end of the spectrum, the establishment of cultural associations such as the Royal Society and the Royal Canadian Academy provided an official presence of culture which would have been quite in line with the desire for respectability which MacLulich has mentioned. However, the newspapers only supported those institutions which obviously fulfilled a popular

<sup>19</sup>"The Lack of Canadian Literature," Globe, 4 Oct. 1887, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup>"Saunterings," Week, 30 Sept. 1886, pp. 797-98.

need. Thus support for the Royal Society remained at best lukewarm. Conversely, the Academy continued to be positively promoted.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps even the pressures for the establishment of a permanent art gallery in Toronto were commensurate with the Philistine sense, but even here it is clear the newspapers felt a permanent gallery could fulfil an actual educational need. Nonetheless, the increasing appearance of Canadian publications and Canadian art works were the best evidence of an expanding interest in local cultural matters.

Although less apparent on the surface, there were wider signs of a developing cultural taste. The cheap reprints of books (which must have sold extremely well if the complaints against them were indicative) and the proliferation of art reproductions were evidence of the anonymous masses increasing interest in what is often termed the "finer things" of life.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>As the Globe noted in an article which praised the work of the Royal Canadian Academy in promoting art education: "It is not sufficient simply to establish art schools and an association of art. These may drag on a sickly existence for some years, but the want of sympathy and support work their consequences, and by degrees the institution passes from view." "Art in Canada," Globe, 8 Feb. 1886, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup>G.M. Grant mentioned that in addition to newspapers the general public read "cheap novels pirated as a rule." See: G.M. Grant, "Anti-National Features of the National Policy," Canadian Magazine, 1 (March, 1893), 9. John A. Cooper wrote that he had been told by a book publisher that Canadians bought three types of books: cheap paper covered novels, cheap cloth books, and subscription books. See: John A. Cooper, "Canadians as Book-Buyers," Canadian Magazine, 9 (Sept. 1897), 437. "Books That Are Read," Globe, 10 Jan. 1884, p. 3. A newspaper interview with Toronto booksellers mentioned that sales of the first two categories of books

The newspapers were aware of, and in sympathy with, the tentative aesthetic gropings of the large population which had resulted from the spread of general education. Not only did the dailies encourage the public in aesthetic matters, but they castigated the attitudes of critics who dismissed the public as mere Philistines. As an editorial in the Mail and Empire began: "Notwithstanding all that has been said about Philistinism and the contempt that has been poured upon the capacity of the crowd for artistic discrimination, it is probably a serious error to regard the verdict of the public at large on pictures as beneath notice." The editorial, entitled "The Public and Art," went on to point out that while it was the custom of critics to indicate that public opinion was worthless in art matters, if the public could not appreciate the finer things of art, both the works and the critics themselves might be called into question:

Is their office simply to gratify the select few and to refine those who are already refined? The attitude of these critics appears to be that of men who should say: 'Art' has a mission to ennoble and dignify your surroundings, but she speaks in a language you cannot understand; she can show you beauti-

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included novels by William Black, Marian Crawford, W.D. Howells and Julian Hawthorne who had a "good sale." However, the works most called for were by such writers as Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, Scott and Hardy. There was also a "slight call" for the works of Henry James and others of the new American school of fiction.

ful things; but you are unfortunately blind; she can sing to you, but you are deaf. It is not quite easy to understand the exhilaration with which these gentry pose before some extravagant display of a painter's eccentricity . . . and rejoice in the fact that they alone can understand it and nobody else. It may be affirmed that if the general public has no glimmering of the meaning of a work of art, that work has not much meaning in it.<sup>23</sup>

Notice that the writer argued that the work lacked meaning only if the public gleaned nothing, had "no glimmering" of its worth. The writer contended that aesthetic appreciation covered a wide range of tastes, but the "lower notes" would always be "sounded by the crowd."

These people—the crowd—were more qualified for the critical task because of the increased general level of aesthetic education:

It must be remembered that the last quarter of a century has done a good deal towards elevating the general standard of taste . . . the public jury . . . that now judges works of art is far better qualified for the task that was its analogue of former days. By the reading of poetry, by the hearing of occasional fine music, and by the seeing of occasional fine acting, the public taste has been considerably elevated.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>"The Public and Art," Mail and Empire, 16 March 1895, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup>Mail and Empire, 16 March 1895, p. 8.



If the newspapers praised the improvement in public taste, they also realized that standards were relative and that there was an inverse relationship between the general standard of taste and the resulting cultural product. On the one hand, writers in the dailies counselled patience to those who felt the general level of aesthetic taste was deficient. An 1891 editorial in the Globe stated:

A paternal government does its best to compel us to buy Canadian clothing, boots and sugar, and partially succeeds, but neither protection nor any other forcing process will do very much to give us the finer products of the hand and the brain. If the state of things complained of is due to the defective taste and culture of the people of Canada nothing can be done but to wait until taste and culture improve.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, the newspapers confirmed the Ruskinian argument that a great art was a product of a great individual and a great society. As the Globe put it: "There is no such thing as spontaneous generation. The greatest writer is the product of his time; in him the thoughts that are worked out in many minds find an interpreter." In reply to those who complained that public indifference was responsible for the lack of Canadian cultural material, the writer was quick to point out

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<sup>25</sup> "A Canadian Poet," Editorial, Globe, 25 April 1891, p. 8.

that at the same time public neglect had never hindered the pen of the greatest writers.<sup>26</sup>

Conversely, for many writers in the periodicals, the desire for cultural development seems to have been imbued with a sense of urgency. Their discussions were characterized by conflicting desires. Cultural progress was needed to match progress in more materialist areas. Yet, it was felt progress in the arts was hampered by Canada's ambiguous political position.

The writers in the periodicals were caught in a dilemma. As members of a nineteenth-century society which had in large part emulated a British model, they believed that the literati were spokesmen for society and thus were endowed with a mission to improve the lives of those around them. British cultural proponents such as Ruskin emphasized that improvement or progress consisted in the enriched activity of the mind rather than in what was viewed as the illusionary improvement of the material environment and of social and political institutions.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Such an argument would have been a response to Duncan's contention that public indifference was responsible for the dearth of Canadian literature: "That [Canadian books] are not written is partly our own fault we cannot compel the divine afflatus; but we can place ourselves in an attitude to receive that psychological subtlety should the gods deign to bestow it upon us. But the olympians, bending Canada-ward, hear no prayer for their great guerdons. We are indifferent; we go about our business and boast of the practical nature of our aspirations. . . ." "Saunterings," Week, 30 Sept. 1885, pp. 707-08.

<sup>27</sup>Altick, Victorian People and Ideas, pp. 240-42.

Conditions in Canada, however, did not completely resemble those of nineteenth-century industrial England. In the political sphere no one could deny that much progress had been made within living memory, what with the winning of responsible government and the achievement of Confederation. Locally, within fifty years Toronto had grown from a muddy town of a few hundred people to a bustling metropolitan city. And, as Carl Berger has pointed out, this progress was a fundamental principle of the imperialists' national ideal.<sup>28</sup> Ironically, it was not enough for the proponents of cultural progress.

For many of the writers in the periodicals, Canada had been cast into a state of limbo hovering between colony and nation. Culture, therefore, had to bridge the gap and give Canada the dignity of statehood she had been denied politically. Paradoxically, however, many writers felt that a national literature was an impossibility without political nationhood. Thus, on the one hand, a critic in the Week argued that Lampman's success was of inappreciable value to Canada "helping to invest her with a dignity which all her achievements hitherto, in the political, agricultural or commercial orders, have been powerless to obtain for her."<sup>29</sup> On the other

<sup>28</sup> Carl Berger, The Sense of Power (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 109.

<sup>29</sup> Lily M. Barry, "Prominent Canadians—XXXV: Archibald Lampman," Week, 10 April 1891, pp. 298-300.

hand, Graeme Mercer Adam argued in the same periodical that the "status of a dependency" was not conducive to the development of a national literature.<sup>30</sup>

According to such periodical writers, cultural prophets needed immediate honour in their own country. As for a society that did not wildly rush to purchase Canadian paintings or books, there was the convenient label. They were Philistines. There is little indication that periodical writers took into account the actual cost of such works or their innate worth. It was simply a patriotic duty to purchase Canadian cultural products regardless of their aesthetic quality.

The newspapers did not agree that Canadians should be forced to buy books or paintings simply because they were the "products of Canadians' brains and workmanship."<sup>31</sup> In fact, because they had been too often duped into buying second-rate materials, the newspapers felt the public were becoming leery about being taken in by Canadian creators. Thus, in the 1890s, the newspapers began to stress the necessity for higher critical standards in reviews of cultural material. In assessing this situation, one journalist mentioned that while kindly lenient criticism

<sup>30</sup>"National Literature and the Scoffing Spirit," Week, 5 Jan. 1888, pp. 85-86.

<sup>31</sup>"Canadian Literature," Editorial, Globe, 13 June 1884, p. 4.

might prove an initial stimulus to a young author, in the long run both he and the critic would be discredited:

It must be admitted that undeserved praise of a book is neither fair to the author nor the public. The one is encouraged and continues in an occupation for which he may not be fitted, and the public is deluded into expending money and time in buying and reading what is of little value. When carried on systematically this system of puffing cannot fail to prove harmful to the cause which reviewers in their short-sighted generosity are desirous of assisting. . . .<sup>32</sup>

Globe editor J. S. Willison was even more adamant. Speaking at the banquet in honour of Gilbert Parker, he stated:

The press cannot persuade the Canadian community to take a third-rate writer at a first rate valuation. There can be no good result if we . . . glorify paste because it is home-made paste. If we become literary rag-peddlers, if we exalt a poor literature we do an injury to the state, an injury to the character of the people. . . . It may be that the average of literary work of Canada is higher than the average of literary criticism, but the truth is that we turn out our share of literary rubbish, and to give legitimacy to this rubbish would be to degrade the Canadian press and not to elevate Canadian literature.<sup>33</sup>

This concern for improved standards was reflected in the actual critical judgements made by writers in the newspapers. As we have seen, there were increasing attempts to come to terms with the individual merits of various writers without resorting to empty

<sup>32</sup>"Literary Notes," Globe, 7 Jan. 1893, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup>"Gilbert Parker," Globe, 7 April 1896, p. 1.

flattery, or permitting patriotic zeal to replace intelligent criticism.

T. G. MacLulich has pointed out that a tendency to base literary judgements on non-literary considerations particularly of a pre-conceived nature could be considered a characteristic critical attitude of the Philistine. The Philistine critic particularly failed to "suspend judgment when faced with any challenge to his preconceptions, or with any contemporary or controversial subject."

Questions of taste were therefore inextricably linked with other predispositions concerning societal development in general.<sup>34</sup> Thus aesthetic judgements were often affected by a priori attitudes concerning such questions as morality and patriotism.

Those who have researched the major Toronto periodicals of the latter part of the nineteenth century, have in one form or another, all contended that writers in these journals displayed an orthodox Christian morality which was reflected in their attitudes to literature.<sup>35</sup> These critics imparted an aesthetic sense of the arts which was both limited in range and based on a quasi-religious

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<sup>34</sup>MacLulich, p. 152.

<sup>35</sup>For example, Robert L. McDougall pointed out that the type of poetry favoured in the Canadian Monthly was that which provided a "combination of intellectual complexity in moral import with simplicity in artistic expression." Claude T. Bissell has noted that George Eliot and Matthew Arnold were revered in the Week because their work reflected an attempt to combine the morality of orthodox Christianity with the objective skepticism promoted by science. See: McDougall, p. 301, and Bissell, pp. 244-45.

sense of what they viewed as the ideal. They assumed that literature and paintings were meant, on the one hand, to inspire and, on the other, to reflect a hierarchical view of society as stable and ordered. Cultural material was meant neither to be contentious or unpleasant, nor was it to act as a force for change.

Claude T. Bissell has shown that in the field of fiction, writers in the Week displayed a preference for romance: the traditional novel of complicated plot, generalized description and wholesome morality. Although realism with its emphasis on analysis and character found some support in the Week, Bissell emphasized that even the most liberal critic in this periodical "found it impossible to admit the French naturalists [led by Emile Zola] into the republic of letters." On the whole, however, realism was most palatable as local colour fiction—the type of story which combined realistic details of a locale with a sunny observation of life.<sup>36</sup>

While the newspapers also displayed a predilection to romance, this was offset by a healthy dose of realism. Certainly, the authors most featured in the serialized fiction carried by the newspapers were writers of romance. Stories by William Black, Bertha Clay, Agnes Fleming, Mary Jane Holmes, Dora Russell and E.P. Roe were frequent. However, occasional fiction by William Howells, Henry James and even the arch enemy of periodical critics,

<sup>36</sup>Bissell, p. 246.

Emile Zola, reveal that the newspapers were not adverse to the various schools of realism.<sup>37</sup>

Even more significant were the critical attempts to classify and analyse the categories of fiction. Here again, while the preference tended to swing toward romance, there was little of the negative posturing toward realism so apparent in the periodicals. In one remarkable article describing the two classes of fiction as "Romance" and "Naturalism," a writer noted that romanticism had come to stand "not only for optimism in fiction but for much that is decorous." The term "naturalism" was employed to cover those categories of fiction often described as realistic. Naturalism was subdivided into four groups: "ultra-naturalists or realists"; "sentimentalists"; "analysts" and "sciolists." However, the author added that the "true artist" who truly delineated life incorporated all these groups and more since he incorporated the factor of the sublime:

The eternal, inexplicable and endless struggle between the forces of life, and death, construction and destruction, affirmation and denunciation, have made possible a pause, an equilibrium, a moment of choice to each individual which occurs again and again until the final dissolution of body and will and to all eternity perhaps who can tell? This is the region of the sublime....<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>See, for example, Zola's story, "A Rich Man's Death," World, 20 Sept. 1881 and "Babette," Globe, 3 Aug. 1885.

<sup>38</sup>"Eyes Like the Seer," Globe, 23 Feb. 1895, p. 14.



As for the romanticist, the author stated that he could amuse, but never convince.

Earlier in an editorial describing the "Change In Literary Fashion," the Globe noted of Howells and James that they had exhausted the limits of psychological and reportorial fiction: "Exquisite as their art is, it does not satisfy the craving for 'story.' No one can fail to admire the skill with which they record turns of conversation and sketch everyday characters. But after all is done, what does it amount to?" The largest complaints against these authors were that their characters and their experiences were neither unusual nor interesting, thus the reader has little to sustain him.<sup>39</sup>

If the newspapers did not wholeheartedly support these trends in fiction, neither did they find them outrageously objectionable. This was also evident in their stand against censorship on grounds of immorality. On at least two occasions in 1881, the collector of customs seized shipments of reading material and art scheduled for entry into the country because they were offensive and obscene. The literary works in question were: Voltaire's Pocket Theology and Paine's Age of Reason. The paintings had been exhibited at the Royal Academy in England and at the centennial exhibition in

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<sup>39</sup>"Changes in Literary Fashion," Editorial, Globe, 16 June 1886, p. 9.

Philadelphia as examples of the French school. Evidently, the secretary of the Royal Canadian Academy had also pronounced the paintings legitimate examples of art. Such were the works that had been censored. With the exception of the Mail, which defended the seizure (perhaps because it was under the authority of a Conservative government), the Toronto newspapers fought an active campaign against this censorship. Essentially, their argument was that the people themselves should have the right to decide what their tastes in literature and art would be. It should not be determined for them.<sup>40</sup>

According to the writers in the periodicals, creative art had to have a morally uplifting purpose. In this, Canadian critics were quite in tune with the moral aesthetic of Arnold and Ruskin. Content, not style, was the important feature of a literary work or a painting. A viewer or a reader was to have an immediate reaction to a work of art, thus there was to be nothing ambiguous or unclear that would interfere with the emotional impact.

Agnes Maule Machar had found it necessary to remind Lampman of this function of art in her review of his first book in the Week. She particularly castigated the descriptive poems "Among the Timothy," "Winter," and "Winter Hues Recalled," as

<sup>40</sup>See: "The New Censorship of Literature," Globe, 11 Oct. 1881, p. 4. "Our Censors of Morals," World, 28 Oct. 1881.

poems lacking suitable content. They were likened to a "noble portico which leads no wither" or an "exquisitely carved frame which enshrines no picture":

In some of Mr. Lampman's longer descriptive-ness we feel a certain unsatisfactoriness, as if with all their beauty, the poems lack an adequate *raison d'être*. We seem to ask for it a stronger motive. . . . To stir us strongly the description of outward beauty needs a strong human or subjective interest. . . . It is . . . a common tendency among some of the most popular poets of our day to fall into the old Greek habit of resting in "Nature" instead of fulfilling the nobler function of interpreter, without which poetry is 'divine poetry' no longer.<sup>41</sup>

J. A. Radford emphasized that the true artist painted because he loved God, nature and humanity. Writing in the Canadian Magazine, he stated that the "spasmodic eruptions of wantonness" often displayed on canvas were the products of "diseased brains" and suggested a lack of feeling and refinement. If art was to have an educative effect, it had to be "wholesome and clean" and had to be infused with a spirit of "truth" so that the "observer would immediately experience a mental transportation." Truth to nature was more important than technique:

Genuine notes and honest impressions direct from nature have decidedly more weight with the critics, and drawing power with the uninitiated, than all the phantasmagoria ever painted from memory by the most brilliant

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<sup>41</sup>"Some Recent Canadian Poems," Week, 22 March 1893, pp. 251-52.

and versatile master! Why? Because nature's truths are the acme of originality, ever varying and unlimited and the artist who vainly endeavours to cover these over with a thin veneer of drawing and techniques, presumes too far, and shows but the underground of ignorance.<sup>42</sup>

Certainly, such critics indicated a strong abhorrence of the doctrine of art for art's sake. Rather, they reiterated over and over that technique was not as important as the ability to provoke an appropriate emotional and moral response within the reader or viewer.

Again the newspapers were much more open-minded. They not only revealed a concern with technique, but they were even prepared to admit the validity of the doctrine of art for art's sake. The Mail argued that aestheticism had done a great deal of good in "fertilizing the germs of artistic perception in many natures."

While the writer admitted that some of the developments of aestheticism had been extravagant and ridiculous, he argued that any movement which had sufficient vitality to change mankind would always have excesses. The important point was that the quality of everyday life had been improved by the aesthetic movement: "The propaganda of art which was inaugurated by the aesthetic school has improved artistic perception and given us numerous results of

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<sup>42</sup>"Canadian Art, Schools, Artists and Art," Canadian Magazine, 5 (March 1894), 462-466.

graciousness and beauty. It has improved our taste and modified the crudity as to what is beautiful and what is not."<sup>43</sup>

On another occasion, the newspapers supported the exhibition of a painting, rejected on account of its offensive subject matter, because the technique was good and the portrayal effective. In 1893, Ernest Seton Thomson's submission to the Canadian exhibit forming part of the Chicago World's Fair had been refused because the dramatic narrative subject matter of the painting was gruesome, unpleasant and portrayed no obvious moral lesson. In fact, it revealed the malevolency of nature in respect to man. The painting entitled Awaited in Vain depicted the aftermath of a savage slaughter of a homeward bound young man in winter. In the background the tiny figure of a woman was portrayed by a cabin obviously awaiting her husband's return. In the foreground, several wolves standing over blood spattered snow conveyed the futility of the young woman's vigil.

The painting, ostensibly was ~~rejected~~ by the Academy selection committee because the subject was "repulsive" and would be a "reproach rather than a credit to Canada" even though it was admitted that the technical workmanship was superior. Pointing out that the arguments of those who favoured the picture ought to be

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<sup>43</sup>"The Work of Aestheticism," Editorial, Mail, 17 Sept. 1892, p. 2.

heard, the Globe solicited and published the highly positive opinions of three painters, among them the former president of the Academy, Lucius O'Brien.<sup>44</sup> Thus it was that Thompson's painting was eventually included in the Canadian exhibit.

Aside from insisting that literature and art maintain a suitable moral decorum, critics in the periodicals conceived of a limited range of appropriate subject matter for literature and painting. As T. G. MacLulich explained these critics displayed a fondness for subjects which had been "hallowed and sanctified by tradition." Biblical subjects, nature and patriotism were the predominant themes for poetry, while historical events, exotic peoples and heroic deeds were the preferred themes for fiction. According to MacLulich, anything modern was taboo.<sup>45</sup>

Unlike the periodicals, the newspapers were not adverse to the depiction of modern everyday life. In response to an American journal's assertion that Canada had no literature because she had no worthy subject matter, the Globe declared that there was ample material both historical and contemporary: "There are fine subjects in the relations of the Jesuits; there are subjects quite as exciting in the lives of any of the people walking on King Street at the moment."<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup>"Mr. Thompson's Picture," Globe, 30 March 1893, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup>MacLulich, pp. 115-118.

<sup>46</sup>"Literary Subjects," Editorial, Globe, 6 Feb. 1886, p. 9.

In previous chapters we have seen that the newspapers promoted the depiction of Canadian subject matter in both literature and painting. Negatively, some might argue that the dailies continued insistence that painters and writers portray native subjects was merely a parochial concern. Since patriotic themes were often considered suitable subject matter in the Philistine mentality, and political views often became mixed with matters of taste, it might be assumed that in concerning themselves with Canadian questions, the dailies were revealing their obvious Philistinism. Such an argument, however, would fail to reflect the reality of the newspapers' concerns. Toronto newspapers sensed that if authors and painters were ever to forge an identifiable national culture it would have to be the result of defining the Canadian imagination.

The newspapers argued that writers and painters should create works which came out of their own observations and lifestyles—which resulted from the Canadian experience. They emphasized that great writers and painters had always created out of the materials of their own cultural environment. The attempt to transport past creators' experiences of life only resulted in inferior works:

It has been customary in the past two hundred years for American writers, both French and English to imitate the literary fashions of other countries. Boileau was perhaps in place in Paris, but the spectacle of . . . Bibaud writing

satires on Avarice and Envy at Quebec is ludicrous. Similarly, Faust was in place in Europe, with its medieval past; but however sincerely one may admire the march of verse in Saul and the [diablerie?] of the plot, the poem is exotic on Canadian ground, and Charles Heavyside would have been possibly a greater poet had he accomplished the feat of discovering a Canadian subject.<sup>47</sup>

Of course, the most obvious aspect of the Canadian experience was the geographic landscape. Here again, the attitudes of the writers in the dailies were more positive than that of the critics in the periodicals. The problem for Canadians was similar to that of the Americans a few generations earlier: the uncivilized aspects of Canadian nature did not fit the traditional British and European views of nature. In John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America 1840-1900, Roger B. Stein mentioned that there were varying attitudes to nature in the United States of the 1840s. On the one hand, American nationalists praised the supremacy of American nature; on the other hand, the cosmopolitanists, criticised it for its failure to resemble European landscape.<sup>48</sup> The same problem was evident in Canadian cultural attitudes of the 1880s and 1890s.

One reviewer in the Week complained that nature "hast no mysteries for us."<sup>49</sup> Another complained of the deficiencies of

<sup>47</sup>"Some New Books," Globe, 10 March 1895, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup>John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America 1840-1900 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 26-27.

<sup>49</sup>L. O'Loane, "Our Chances For A Literature," Week, 29 Feb. 1890, p. 200.



Canadian nature: "We have had no barbarous infancy moulded by the natural features of our land. No divinities have sanctified to us our mountains and streams."<sup>50</sup> What they were saying in effect was that Canadian landscape did not fit their preconceived ideas about it.

In contrast, the Globe suggested that there were positive possibilities in Canadian landscape. While the writer admitted that to expect a poet to flourish on the Prairies was to expect a plant to grow without nourishment; at the same time there were creative aspects to the Prairie landscape in its suggestiveness of the "infinite in space and time," an infinity conveyed by the great distances one faced. It was in the Rockies, however, that the newest opportunities for creative fantasy existed:

The Rockies and the Selkirks with their towering peaks, frowning precipices, and awful gorges must at no distant day, call into being a distinct race of western poets. It would be strange but comforting should that most unpoetic product of our civilization, the modern railway, thus ultimately become one of the most potent agencies in stimulating both the artistic and poetic faculties. . . .<sup>51</sup>

Thus, it can be seen whether it was in the stance toward the aesthetic sensibilities of the public, the attitudes to suitable

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<sup>50</sup>J.E. Logan, "National Literature," Week, 21 Aug. 1884, pp. 600-01.

<sup>51</sup>"The Decay of Imagination," Editorial, Globe, 27 May 1889, p. 4.

subject matter or the actual purpose of literature and painting, the newspapers had a far more liberal and less philistine approach than did the critics in the periodicals. Interestingly, critics who wrote for both mediums often displayed facets of a split personality in their contrary attitudes. A critic such as A.E. Wetherald who condemned "unliterary people" in one of her articles for the Week, no doubt, felt some ambivalence that her columns in the Globe were actually directed at such a constituency.<sup>52</sup> Certainly, in a letter to W.D. Lighthall, she attempted to blame deficiencies in her writing style upon the necessity of minimizing her vocabulary for the sake of half literate newspaper readers.<sup>53</sup>

Two reviews written for the Globe and the Week respectively indicate both a certain ambivalence in Wetherald's attitude and a clear perception that she was writing for two audiences. The reviews published in August, 1889 both dealt with William Wilfred Campbell's volume of poetry Lake Lyrics. They were approximately the same length—about five hundred words. Generally, both reviews praised the book, but there were essential differences.

In the Globe review, Wetherald mentioned several poems which were ignored in the Week article. These poems were

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<sup>52</sup>"Unliterary People," Week, 17 March 1887, p. 250.

<sup>53</sup>A.E. Wetherald, letter to W.D. Lighthall, 21 Dec. no. yr., Lighthall Papers, McGill University.

several which celebrated humanity. Wetherald particularly noted "Keziah," a poem in which "human crime and anguish" were "mystically blent with the lake's glamour of vapours and cavernous echoes"; and "Dan'l and Matt," a dialect poem which depicted the "tender and strong but seldom-celebrate affection between two brothers." Moreover, Wetherald mentioned that "Canadian Folk-song," a homely ballad of winter, was her favourite poem in the volume.<sup>54</sup>

Not only were these poems omitted in the Week review, but Miss Wetherald criticised the type of work represented by such poems. She stated:

There is a pictorial quality in nearly everything Campbell has written, and it is safe to say that any poem of his which does not exemplify this pictorial quality is not in his best vein. . . . This is a poet which [sic] can clothe 'gaunt, huge misshapen crags' with beauty and turn a description of winter days into a vision of daylight, but who fails to lift us up to any amount of transfiguration when he looks away from nature.

In the Week review, the author was concerned to portray the moral aesthetic. In the preceding passages she mentioned nature as the source of "transfiguration." Earlier in the review, she stated that technique was secondary to the impression which a book made upon a reader. The most important criterion of a book was in its success

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<sup>54</sup> "Lake Lyrics," Editorial rev., Globe, 16 Aug. 1889, p. 4.

at elevating the reader's thoughts: "to be stirred, lifted, carried out of ourselves, forced to see that nothing is common and unclean, this is of incomparable importance."<sup>55</sup>

Such comments need to be juxtaposed to Wetherald's confessed admiration for "Canadian Folksong" in the Globe review. Rather than lifting or stirring the reader, lines that run "Margery, Margery, make the tea, / Singeth the kettle merrily,"<sup>56</sup> remind one of the everyday common occurrences that life is all about. Certainly, Wetherald realized that such ordinary material would not have been acceptable to her audience in the Week. They would have preferred to read about poetry which elevated rather than revealing the prosaic aspects of existence.

Many years later, Wetherald admitted that Globe writer, E.W. Thomson, had often criticised her for such attitudes:

The Wetheralds' . . . had a bad habit of calling their ignorant country neighbours 'Mujiks.' E.W.T. held this habit in abhorrence. He said I scorned the common people. Scorn is too strong a word. It was rather that I wondered at them for wishing to meet together to discuss roads and weather and wheat and livestock and exchange mouldy old chestnuts called jokes, when they might sit

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<sup>55</sup>"Lake Lyrics," rev. Week, 30 Aug. 1889, p. 615.

<sup>56</sup>William Wilfred Campbell, "Canadian Folksong," Lake Lyrics And Other Poems (Saint John: Macmillan, 1889), pp. 88-90.

at home and read Ruskin and Henry James. But E.W. was right the great writer does not waste time writing about other writers; he gets into his book the kind of people who think an allusion to the pen is a reference to the pigpen.<sup>57</sup>

Although Wetherald admitted that the attitudes she had held in the 1880s had been too narrow, a hint of moral superiority was still apparent even in the 1920s as the final lines of this letter indicate.

Blinded by their own prejudices, the periodical critics were unable to provide a clear guide to national consciousness in the 1880s and 1890s. Rather than scrutinizing their own beliefs and aesthetic tastes, they preferred to think that society did not measure up to their preconceived standards. While they labelled society and the newspapers, in particular, as Philistines, it was the periodical critics themselves who in some ways were the actual enemy of culture because they refused to judge either literature or paintings on their own terms.

If the periodical writers were the "saving remnant," we can be thankful that the newspaper journalists were the "leavening lump." The latter group was far more willing to meet the needs of a society that was adapting to a North American environment. Less dogmatic than the periodicals and not restricted by a narrow moral aesthetic, the newspapers provided a forum both for the new

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<sup>57</sup> A. E. Wetherald, letter to M. O. Hammond, 13 March, no yr., Hammond Papers, Archives of Ontario.

critical ideas on literature and painting which were appearing in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, writers in the dailies promoted the creation of a distinctive national literature and painting which would depict the Canadian experience. At the same time, they were aware of the result of kindly but misplaced praise in regard to such work. Thus, they advocated higher critical standards both as a means to promote higher creative achievements in Canada and as a means to educate the public's innate aesthetic propensity. Although they were called Philistines, the newspapers revealed an openness to ideas and aesthetic tastes that was at total variance with the denigrating label given them by the Pharisees of the periodicals.

## CONCLUSION

E. H. Carr once remarked that we tend to think of the mediaeval period as characterized by religious devotion, for that is the account that has been handed down to posterity by chroniclers who had a professional interest in religion. The unwritten records of that historical period could alter the picture drastically.<sup>1</sup> So it is with the record of literary and visual culture in nineteenth-century Toronto and, by extension, English-speaking Canada. Our view of a Philistine society which denigrated cultural matters has been profoundly affected by those who had a professional interest in literary and visual culture: writers in the periodicals such as Graeme Mercer Adam, Sara Jeannette Duncan and Ethelwyn Wetherald; and such commentators on culture as John George Bourinot and Goldwin Smith. We are more fortunate than mediaeval historians, however, for other records remain. The contents of Toronto daily newspapers make it clear that the development of a Canadian culture was not solely the concern of the creative artists and a few missionary-minded individuals connected with the periodicals.

Contrary to the assertions of writers in the periodicals, Toronto newspapers provided their readers with a broad range of

<sup>1</sup>What Is History? (London: Penguin, 1964), pp. 13-14.

reading matter presented in a popular but responsible format. It is evident that the scope of material reflected both the expanding capacity of the newspapers themselves and the increasing diversity of Canadian society. As Canadian literature and art productions expanded in the latter part of the 1880s, the newspapers enlarged the amount of space devoted to these arts. Thus, the newspapers bequeathed to posterity a large, albeit unwieldy source, for cultural attitudes in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, the very fact of a wide readership meant that cultural expressions reached a large segment of the population.

Writers in the periodicals also alleged that creative artists received little support from a society devoted to materialistic pursuits. Such a charge was at best an exaggeration. The most obvious example of cultural promotion was the establishment of the Royal Canadian Academy and the Royal Society. If the newspapers generally greeted the former with enthusiasm and the latter with dismay, it was due to the differing role these two institutions would play in actually promoting Canadian literature and painting. The Royal Canadian Academy was viewed as an organization which would be national in scope, would encompass both professional painters and members of the public interested in art, and which would have a definite role to play in the development of Canadian painting. Through their annual exhibitions, the Academy would provide both



the public and the artists themselves with an opportunity to compare and judge the creative achievements of Canadian artists. Moreover, the Academy would give the artists a larger market for their works than had previously been in existence.

Conversely, the establishment of the English literature section of the Royal Society was seen as precipitous. In 1882, Canada had few achievements of any stature in the literary field, and the limited membership of the Society meant that a select group would be set above their equals without adequate evidence of superiority. Even the Mail, which supported the Royal Society, found it necessary to defend the institution in terms of its future worth rather than in respect to its current endeavours on behalf of literature.

Generally, the newspapers emphasized the need for a popular culture: one which would reflect the needs and aspirations of this new country. Even though they supported the Royal Canadian Academy, the dailies had reservations about the haut monde aspect their exhibitions sometimes acquired. Sir Alexander Campbell's rude behaviour at the opening of the 1889 exhibition thus became an occasion for comment on the relationship between art and society. On the one hand, as a public figure Campbell should have provided an enlightened example of cultivated taste to the public. On the other hand, rather than relying on the social prestige of such figures for the success of their exhibitions, the artists should have

been looking more to the general public.

Attitudes toward government support for the arts were somewhat ambivalent. In general, the newspapers felt that creative artists should seek their support from the public rather than from government patronage. This did not prevent the Globe, however, from suggesting that such poets as William Wilfred Campbell and Archibald Lampman should receive recognition for their creative achievements from the government in the form of civil service sinecures. At the same time, the Globe did not simply look to the government to provide for such writers. The introduction of the "Mermaid Inn" column, the special Christmas editions, and the financial campaign to aid Alexander McLachlan revealed that the Globe and other newspapers actively supported Canadian authors. Testimonial dinners and literary evenings indicated that other segments of society also promoted Canadian culture.

The role of the creative artist was also changing in the late nineteenth century, making it necessary for painters and writers to thrust themselves into the marketplace. Ever-increasing competition for a limited market resulted in a protectionist impulse similar to that being manifested by the trades and professions in late nineteenth-century Ontario. Newspapers both provided source material for an examination of this problem and actively participated in the debate over cultural protection.

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Response to the formation of the Royal Canadian Academy and the Royal Society was, in large part, due to their actual functioning as agents of cultural protection. The outcry against the Royal Society, resulting from the awarding of an annual government grant, arose because the grant seemed to favour a select few. The publication of the Transactions was neither subject to the criticism of the public nor did their publication seem to benefit the public in any way. Conversely, exhibitions of the Academy provided members with a market and enabled the public to judge the fair market of such works. Thus, both groups benefited.

The newspaper response to the copyright question was tempered by an awareness that any copyright law would have to take into account the rights of readers to purchase books at a reasonable cost. A protective tariff on paintings did not pose a similar problem in the view of the newspapers since the works of Canadian artists tended always to be cheaper than foreign canvases. Interestingly, while writers in the periodicals argued vociferously for a copyright law to protect their own interests, they seem to have been either unaware of or unsympathetic to the similar needs of painters in regard to a protective tariff.

Varying perceptions of the actual creative role of painters and authors also contributed to a difference in attitudes to protection. There seems to have been a widespread view of the painter

as a highly skilled technician. As such, he was entitled to combine to reduce competition and to expect a "living wage" for his canvases. The role of the author was not so clearcut. Endowed with the "divine afflatus," the author was viewed by writers in the periodicals as one who was given a mission to illuminate the lives of others. As such, the author was discouraged from labouring solely for gain. Here again, the newspapers were more pragmatic. They encouraged authors to strike out boldly into the larger audiences of the United States and Britain; and they suggested that a profitable market awaited those struck with the "divine fire," if they would only have the patience to keep labouring until their talent was recognized.

In surveying the actual critical material contained in the newspapers on literature and painting, it became evident that contrary to comments in the periodicals, newspapers neither ignored Canadian creative achievements nor did they greet them with meaningless praise. Canadian works of literature and art were reviewed carefully, often with insight.

The response to Lampman and Roberts revealed in the newspapers indicates that reviewers recognized both their poetic qualities and their vital contribution to a native school of poetry. In criticising Roberts' tendency to produce imitations of classical poetry and in praising the intrinsic qualities of such a poem as "Tantramar

Revisited," these journalists revealed a profound understanding of the essential qualities of what was a truly original approach to a native theme. The newspapers did not find it necessary to promote Roberts' or Lampman's achievements by linking their works, as writers in the periodicals did, to the pantheon of classical and British authors. Writers in the dailies praised these poets for rendering the Canadian imagination in verse. Conversely, periodical writers lauded the Confederation poets because they had a veneer of sophistication in their poetry which linked them to the established cosmopolitan canon.

Reviews of painting indicate that the newspapers promoted Canadian art as a development which was to characterize the emerging nation. While techniques of French academic painting might be imported, these were to be utilized only as a basis for the depiction of Canadian subject matter. In opposition to writers in the periodicals, the newspapers rejected the argument that art, being convention, was universal and cosmopolitan. Writers in the dailies insisted that a truly great artist always painted out of a close identification with his local environment.

Writers in the dailies were also aware of the changing trends in literature and painting. Although their attempts to understand and define such trends as impressionism in art and realism in painting were sometimes clumsy, such efforts reveal a critical

interest in culture which was neither parochial nor characterized by a dramatic time lag. In fact, it would seem that the dailies were in advance of the periodicals, for as Claude T. Bissell has pointed out, the Week was conservative both in its intellectual attitudes and in its literary tastes.

Moreover, the newspapers were not bound by a narrow moral aesthetic as were the writers in the periodicals. Thus, the newspapers provided a forum for the work of such controversial writers as Emile Zola, and a voice for the discussion of new aesthetic approaches such as the "art for art's sake" movement. Because of their closer affinity to the broad spectrum of daily life, the newspapers were more open to new currents and trends of the period.

It is clear that the newspapers did not exhibit the Philistine mentality with which they were charged. In describing the newspapers as Philistines, the writers in the periodicals were attempting to remove themselves from the popular view of culture which the newspapers promoted. As part of a group which viewed themselves as the cultural elite, writers in the periodicals had a widespread fear that traditional culture and taste were being levelled downward. Thus, they ignored all attempts to develop Canadian culture which did not coincide with their narrow view of the art. They preferred to see themselves as Pharisees who could thank

God that they were not like other men—especially the publicans of the press. \*

These self-styled progenitors of a Canadian culture truly believed they were in the backwaters of a society where no civilization could flourish. It was consoling to believe that if Canadian books did not sell or Canadian publishing ventures continued to fail, it must be the fault of a materialistic Philistine public. Thus, the small band of writers in the periodicals could look upon themselves as martyrs. Indeed, their self-sacrificing stance was so pervasive that we still regard them with a certain mixture of wonder and gratitude. Witness, for example, Roy Daniells' comments in the Literary History of Canada (1976):

As the literate public became larger it appears to have become less literary. Though statistics are lacking, it is clear that English speaking Canadians taking a cultural view of life were at no time very numerous, even in Ontario. Smith, Adam, and their friends made a brave and sustained effort, but never can so much have been owed by so few to so few.<sup>2</sup>

The newspapers reveal, however, that there was a much larger interest in the arts than the periodicals would indicate. The inability to sustain the publication of such periodical ventures as the Canadian Monthly and the Week, therefore, cannot simply be

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<sup>2</sup>"Confederation To The First World War," Literary History of Canada, I, p. 218.

blamed on an unlitrary public. It is more likely that the content of these periodicals simply did not fill the tastes of Canadian society.

On the other hand, the newspapers provided the reading public with both distinctive Canadian material and a local viewpoint. The newspapers desired a culture which would reflect the aims and desires of the Canadian public. Authors, painters, creative works and institutions which fostered the development of that culture were carefully scrutinized and promoted when they were found adequate. This clear-sighted egalitarianism prompted criticism of works or institutions which were not perceived as fostering either an identifiable local culture or one with a democratic basis. In the final analysis, the newspapers demanded that literature and painting have a close relevance to society.

While the newspapers may not have operated on the same intellectual plane as the periodicals, their critical judgements were freer of the cant, the pretensions to cultural superiority so evident in the tone of the periodicals. Ironically, while many periodical writers assumed this superior tone, their writings often demonstrated a lack of understanding of the real nature of the arts. Conversely, the factual commentary carried in the newspapers often probed beneath the veneer of Victorian aesthetic morality and offered discriminating critical judgements.



Toronto newspapers of the years 1880-1896 indicate that Sara Jeannette Duncan's famous comments on the content of Ontario newspapers cannot be taken too literally. If the newspapers of one city reported cultural events, then it is likely other metropolitan newspapers did too. No doubt, there were many small town journals to which such remarks could apply, but the example of Toronto makes it clearly evident that "politics and vituperation" were not the sole journalistic diet of Ontarians. For too long, we have accepted as gospel the remarks of people like Duncan and Bourinot.<sup>3</sup> Yet it should be recalled that their statements were made within specific contexts. Duncan's readers in the Week would have nodded approvingly at the Philistine image of the rest of Ontario. Those listening to Bourinot's address to the Royal Society would have applauded Bourinot's suggestion that the intellectual level of the newspapers did not match the elevated sentiment of a book of philosophy or history. Such people felt they comprised a coterie of the cultural elite and the rest of the population certainly could not match their standards.

Conversely, the Toronto newspapers provided a mass audience of what Bourinot termed the "average . . . intelligence of the

<sup>3</sup>Even a recent history of Ontario utilized Duncan's statements about politics, vituperation and temperance to point out that "most Ontario newspapers were trying to fastidious nerves." See: Joseph Schull, Ontario Since 1867 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), p. 111.

country" with a great deal of material on Canadian literature and painting—much of it informed by intelligent and farsighted commentary. Our knowledge of late nineteenth-century Canadian culture is considerably enriched thanks to the anonymous and wrongfully denigrated editors and writers of these newspapers.

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## APPENDICES



1. Lucius O'Brien, Sunrise on the Saguenay, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



2. John A. Fraser, Laurentian Splendour, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



3. Homer Watson, The Stone Road, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.





4. William Brymner, A Wreath of Flowers, National Gallery  
of Canada, Ottawa.